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# THE VISITING DAY.

## A NOVEL.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
Printed for T. LOWNDES, No. 77.
in *Fleet-Street*.
MDCCLXVIII.

1768

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# THE VISITING DAY.

## LETTER XV.

### To Lady SOMERVILLE.

WOULD you were here, cries my ſweet friend, to raiſe my ſpirits by your amiable vivacity!—Vivacity indeed!—No, Caroline, I have no longer any of that to boaſt of.—Is it poſſible I ſhould, and you, my love,

my friend, ſiſter of my heart, unhappy? Yes, my dear, you cannot conceal it from me—you are more unhappy than you will confeſs; but do not, I charge you, do not give way to it. In ſpite of — I own — ſome unfavourable appearances, your Somerville may ſtill be fond and tender—nor, indeed, will ſuch an attachment, as we fear he is entering into, be able to deprive you of his heart. He may wander — ah, what huſband does not, vile wretches as they are! But he will return to you e'er long — a conqueſt, like that he aims at, he muſt at the ſame time deſpiſe. Her beauty will ſoon grow familiar, and pall upon his ſenſes—and then his imaginary paſſion ceaſes, ſince it was that alone which excited it—then will he, ſenſible of his folly, return to you, whoſe charms can never decay,

decay, never pall. Be patient then, my Caroline—let no murmurs, no upbraidings, eſcape your lips—thoſe lips of yours, which were formed only for kindneſs. Watch not his motions—ſhut your ears to thoſe falſe, thoſe pretended friends, that would tell you tales to his prejudice. You do—I commend your ſpirit—your noble anſwers to that impertinent, ridiculous old miſs—what's her odious name?—I remember none of them. I hate your whole group of acquaintance, without diſtinction; but more than all that ſyren, Walgrove. Had ſhe ever the ſmall-pox? If ſhe has not, I would give fifty guineas to have her handſomely inoculated with a right ſort. It would be a mercy to deprive her of that beauty ſhe knows ſo

little how to ſet a proper value on.—Marry, indeed! — no, no, my good Mama—I know my own intereſt better. —She is recovered, thank heaven! but behold, I am likewiſe recovered from my fit of penitence. I really believe, would ſhe even condeſcend to put one knee to the ground while intreating me, I ſhould almoſt find in my heart to refuſe her—ſo much is it ſteel'd againſt that creature man. Poor Audley ſuffers for it.—I revenge on him the fault of your lord; but why does he continue to torment me thus?—Why will he not take his anſwer? —I will not—no, I never will be a wife. If you, my Caroline, could not ſecure—I will check my pen—it is cruel to enlarge on this ſubject. — I hope every thing from your prudence and amiable ſweetneſs—

neſs.—What a wretch muſt he be, if a woman like you cannot—again!—Vile ſcribbler, what am I about!—I ought rather to endeavour to amuſe you.

Let me change the ſubject, though for one ever ſo trifling—*à propos*—do you know our beau Whiffle is ſet off for town? You may perhaps ſee him amongſt the reſt of your inſignificants. We parted tolerable friends, in ſpite of his late—I was going to ſay—but it is now an age ſince it happened—mortification—the peaceable creature has even forgiven my arch Kitty. O! it won't do—I can't be gay for the life of me! Your dear mama is going to leave us. She has, no doubt, given you a deſcription of her ſweet houſe and gardens—ſhe is not, indeed, going

to leave us; for I believe we ſhall accompany her for a week or two. I know not what I write. Dear creature, haſten your next packet. My lord will be good—my prayers—what am I doing! — I ſhall alarm you more than there is occaſion for, by my ſtrange, rambling, inconſiſtent manner of ſcribbling—but it proceeds from my friendſhip for you. Believe me, dear Caroline, your peace is dearer to me than my own. Adieu, adieu, my ſweet love!—Ever your

SOPHY.

LETTER

## LETTER XIV.

To Miſs Weſtbrook.

COME my dear Sophy, let us not always be in the plaintive ſtrain, let me rather try to r..iſe again thoſe charming ſpirits of your's, which I have unfortunately depreſſed. Let me cheriſh that delightful flatterer hope, which would ſtill perſuade me, that I have not yet loſt my intereſt in the heart of Lord Somerville—the attention of others, with which I was laſt night eminently diſtinguiſhed, ſeems once more to have awakened his affection. I never go into publick without reluc-

tance; but from the conſequence of appearing there, I begin to be a little reconciled to thoſe amuſements. My Somerville, accuſtomed to the ſight of me, ſeemed to have forgot I was ever amiable in his eyes; it was neceſſary that others, by pointing out the few charms I poſſeſs, ſhould again make him recollect them. Faſhion directs our taſte even in beauty — my Lord is too much a man of faſhion not to join the general admiration — you'll think me vain, Sophy, yet was it not your reiterated advice, that I ſhould encourage a good opinion of myſelf, others, you ſaid, would then follow my example — perhaps you was right — come, I think I will — better late than never — adopt your maxim, and ſhake off my diffidence and humility at leaſt,

leaſt, while I deſcribe to you my laſt night's triumph — the whim ſeized a whole circle of embroidered beaux to ſingle me out, as the ſole object of their admiration—but let me be a little more methodical — in the morning, I received a note from Miſs Walgrove, to beg, I would accompany Lady Brathwait, Miſs Anſtruther, and her, to the Ridotto; as it was the laſt for the ſeaſon, no denial would be taken; I muſt poſitively go—When my Lord came in, I ſhewed him her card—he durſt not preſs it to his lips; but I thought his eyes ſparkled with pleaſure, while he peruſed the traces of her ſnowy hand. —What anſwer have your returned Caroline?—None till your lordſhip directs me. Why, my dear, it is quite indifferent to me, if you chuſe to go,

If you can ſhake off that unaccountable dejection——dejection, my Lord! —Nay, my dear, I may be miſtaken, you may, according to your judgment, be in wondrous high ſpirits. I pretend not to be a very critical obſerver; all I know is, that I wiſh to ſee you happy and content. I endeavour to make you ſo; but we do not always ſucceed in our endeavours.—Unkind, cried I; the tears ready to overflow. What have I ſaid or done?—You ſay too little Caroline; but let us drop the ſubject at preſent. If you are going into publick, I would not have you appear with that air of ſadneſs. If you have any regard for me, you will endeavour to do more juſtice to my choice.—You do not, my Lord, ſeem to wiſh I ſhould go—There again, cried

he,

he, a little haſtily, you are ſo ſuſpicious, my dear, you really Caroline, for ſome time paſt, ſeem to have had but very imperfect notions of my true wiſhes. I told you juſt now, they were to ſee you happy. Come, write to Miſs Walgrove; my aunt has already ſet me down, as one of her party. She did not conſider the impropriety of my appearing in publick with my wife; but we muſt put the beſt face we can upon the matter; omit no ornament, that the beau monde may make ſome little allowance for my fondneſs.—He had aſſumed one of his engaging ſmiles, while he ſpoke this—I anſwered with no leſs good humour; for when his dear countenance clears up, mine brightens into a glow of pleaſure.—You, my Lord, are ſo much in vogue, that I doubt not, but the ſtep

you are going to take, unprecedented as it is, will be regarded with a favourable eye—nay, who knows, but you, whoſe very foibles are copied, may not bring even this into faſhion——O fye, my dear, that would be throwing every thing into confuſion—if once we bring married people into that unpolite domeſticated train, then farewel gallantry, intrigue, Ciceſbeos, and all our foreign refinements. Matrimony by degrees would grow ſo eaſy and comfortable, that every one would be ſlipping their necks into the collar, and thus, inſtead of being a land of freedom, would become a land of ſhackles. No, no, what is, is beſt, or rather what is to come is ſtill better.—I remember a prophecy ſomewhere in ſcripture; you, my dear, can, I ſuppoſe, point out the chapter and verſe, for I fear you are

rather

rather a better bible ſcholar than your lord and maſter. It is, I think, pretty near in theſe words:—"And the time "ſhall come, when ſeven women ſhall "take hold of one man, ſaying, we "will provide our own cloaths"——No pin-money inſiſted on, you find—"And eat our own food."—Better ſtill—"Only let us be called by your "name, to take away our reproach."—That time, continued he, laughing, is not far off—the dear creatures are already almoſt as coming as one could wiſh—(the men are as backward;) they have not indeed, as yet, brought themſelves to ſpeak out; but I never ſee a young fellow of fortune appear in publick, but what there are at leaſt ſeven pair of intelligent bright eyes, which ſay to him without the leaſt reſerve—dear ſir, take compaſſion on us,

make

make your own terms, only let us be called by your name, to take away our reproach. O, I foreſee things will ſoon fall into their primitive train.—Polygamy was the firſt, and conſequently the moſt natural inſtitution.—Yet, my lord, interrupted I, ſmiling, the matrimonized part of your ſex would not in general, I fancy, be ſo much delighted, were that change in affairs to take place. One wife is ſufficient for moſt men; but you pay me a high compliment, ſince you ſeem ſo deſirous to multiply thoſe bleſſings.—Why, my dear, the reaſon why we tire of one is obvious, but three or four, what delightful variety!—Ah, my lord, I am perſuaded, a man has a much better appetite for his food, and a better reliſh, who ſits down to one well dreſſed

diſh,

diſh, than he who has half a dozen. For once I will give up the argument, Caroline; we will reſume it another time, for I have ſtill a thouſand good things to ſay in favour of this ſame old patriarchal cuſtom;—but go and diſpatch your card to Miſs Walgrove, and let me ſee my one diſh, ſince you will allow me no more, at leaſt, well dreſſed.—I retired to my cloſet.——What think you, Sophy, of the freedom, with which he treats us poor females; but, in reality his cenſure is but too juſt, I wiſh they would adopt your maxim, and be more conſcious of their worth. Upon my word, women were never held ſo cheap as in the preſent age; no wonder, they live in publick; inſtead of being purſued, they purſue the men. We are over-

ſtocked

ſtocked with beauties, they obtrude themſelves every where; the eye is ſatiated with a profuſion of charms where-ever it turns; were it more ſcarce, it would be more valued. What is ſo, is alone prized—money—Altars are no longer raiſed to Venus and her ſon—Plutus is the god we worſhip.—I wiſh, my dear, you would take our ſaucy Somerville to taſk, for the pretty airs he gives himſelf in regard to polygamy. —No, poſitively I will never conſent that he ſhall take Walgrove as my hand maid; it is the wife's prerogative to provide thoſe left-hand wives—I fancy neither Hagar nor Zilpah were much diſtinguiſhed for their attractions —but how I trifle—no very common thing with me—don't be ſmart on me, Sophy, and aſk me archly, of what

then

then are moſt of your letters compoſed? —Come, my dear, we ſtay too long from this brilliant aſſembly.—Suppoſe me now juſt going to ſtep into my carriage—Miſs Walgrove dreſſed like an angel—Lady Brathwait and Miſs Anſtruther already ſeated.—Yet ſtay, my dear, tho' juſt at the door, I muſt ſtop a few moments—what, ſhall nobody's dreſs receive an encomium but this divinity? I am ſure our teſty ſpinſter would be highly offended were her's, after ſo much labour and pains, to be paſſed by unnoticed—her cap, ruffles, ſtomacher, egrets, for ſhe had half a hundred—every part of her beſpoke a copy of verſes—her gown was yellow and ſilver—her ribbons ſcarlet, and in ſuch profuſion—but ſhe was determined to ſpare no expence—her ſtomacher was

at

at leaſt a yard long, for ſhe has a moſt taper waiſt—her necklace ſtring ſtill longer, which hung down her back like a pair of leading ſtrings—her deſign in wearing thoſe ſtreamers was, I ſuppoſe, that as ſhe is a coy nymph, while ſhe flies from her purſuers, they might by them gently pull her back, and ſtop her flight—what convinced me ſhe was determined on flight, was the two wings ſhe wore on her head, which were already on the full ſtretch; nothing could be more ſingular than her whole appearance—on the ſight of her, our lively Kitty would have exclaimed, How the creature is fork'd out—thus armed at all points—ſharp noſe, ſharp elbows, ſharp chin—was it poſſible the by-ſtanders ſhould eſcape

without

without a wound.—I think, Sophy, I have adopted your ſtile; but I was weary of my own, and now make the moſt of this little gleam of vivacity, which has condeſcended to viſit my almoſt conſtantly dejected heart—are you not ſick of dreſs, my dear?—But patience—a few words of my own, and I have done. Remember my lord's repeated injunctions. Could I after them eſteem it an immaterial point? No, it engaged almoſt two hours of my attention—yet, after all, what can I ſay that will give you a juſt idea of my elegant figure.—Very pretty, cries your ladyſhip, upon my word you come on charmingly.—O, my dear, you muſt lay your account with a thouſand ſtrokes of this nature; for the future we will not take things as we have done, child—I am deter-

determined to be vain in ſpite of nature—but where was I?—O, going to tell you I never looked ſo well in my life—my gown laylock and ſilver, my jewels placed to the greateſt advantage, and my hoop wide enough to eclipſe the beauties of half the circle.—Miſs Walgrove eyed me. I need not aſk your ladyſhip how you do, for upon my word you look quite enchanting—I was going, ſaid Miſs Anſtruther, to pay you a compliment that was made to me on my firſt appearance at court; but it is not every woman who hear thoſe kind of ſpeeches without vanity; and after all, what is a ſet of features and complexion.—I have ſince then diſcouraged as much as poſſible all encomiums of that kind—the men begin

to

to know my taſte, and now ſeldom dare to offend my ears with that ſort of flattery.—The mind Lady Somerville, the mind is the true, the juſt object on which we ought to ſet a value, it is the beauties of that on which I chuſe to be commended; you might juſtly deem it an affront to your *years*, cried Miſs Walgrove archly, were they to flatter you on what any perſon who has eyes, muſt, as you ſay, ſet ſo little value.—She did not appear greatly to reliſh this ſpeech, though her vanity prevented her underſtanding its full meaning. Lady Brathwait was ſo obliging as to ſay, I looked very pretty; but ſhe did not entirely approve of my hair: it was, ſhe thought, rather too little powdered. Miſs Walgrove agreed with her in this, and added, a black velvet

velvet collar was her averſion. Miſs Anſtruther was of a different opinion; for ſhe thought nothing ſhewed one's diamonds to greater advantage: ſhe never wore one, indeed, becauſe ſhe had been told it would prejudice the whiteneſs of the neck; and, though ſhe ſet little value on the fairneſs of hers, yet (at the ſame time ſtretching out a long, lean, ſcraggy, and ſufficiently-ſallow one) yet ſhe had been ſo teazed whenever ſhe wore one—Mr. Eaſy, in particular, abſolutely made himſelf miſerable about it. Men, continued ſhe, are ſtrange creatures!—how few of them are capable of that pure paſſion I could wiſh to inſpire—ſenſe, unruly ſenſe, will interfere.—And yet, cried Miſs Walgrove, I ſhould think no woman on earth ſtood ſo good a

chance

chance of inſpiring that kind of paſſion you contend for, if you inſpire any, as yourſelf. Inſpire any, Miſs, toſſing her head—upon my word, I would have you to know, I have inſpired paſſions before you was out of your leading-ſtrings. If you did not, returned the other coolly, you was wonderous ſlow in your motions. The mortified virgin coloured with reſentment, too late conſcious of the ſlip her tongue had made. I do not pretend, Miſs, to be ſuch a chit as you; yet, I fancy, moſt men of ſenſe would prefer a woman who is come to years of diſcretion, to one who, I much fear, will never arrive at that age, and who has nothing but a baby face, and as baby an underſtanding, to recommend her. Luckily, the coach ſtopt at the

Opera-

Opera-Houſe, or I know not to what lengths this polite quarrel would have run. Never two people had a more cordial averſion to each other, than theſe oppoſites. Miſs Walgrove conſiders the prying maiden as a ſpy upon her actions; while the other regards her blooming charms with an eye of the moſt malignant envy. Lady Brathwait, who thinks her couſin the moſt ridiculous creature in nature, is always delighted to ſee her mortified, and for that reaſon encourages her favourite to be ſatirical. But, my dear, I keep you too long in the cold: let us enter then—and, ſee, my lord flies to introduce us. His hand involuntarily ſeized Miſs Walgrove's; but, recollecting himſelf, he inſtantly quitted it, and took that of Lady Brathwait, whom

he

he gallantly led into the midſt of the bright circle; the good lady highly delighted, for ſhe is not a little proud of her handſome nephew—we followed—the rooms were crouded with well dreſſed beaux and belles—The lights, the company, the variety of agreeable objects, all ſeemingly pleaſed with themſelves and thoſe about them, cannot fail to put one's ſpirits into an agreeable flutter—the ſight of ſo many, at leaſt, ſeemingly happy people, muſt give pleaſure to every benevolent mind—This pleaſure would indeed ſoon be changed into diſguſt, could one hear all the remarks, thoſe ſmiling and ſeeming friends make on each other; but, we muſt not too nicely examine into our amuſements, they will not bear a ſcrutiny. I often wiſh for your happy imagination, which has ſuch a com-

modious faculty of embelliſhing the bright ſide of the proſpect, and of throwing a veil over the dark, ſo as totally to conceal it.—We were hardly ſeated, when the Duke of **** careleſly leaning on the arm of Lord C——, walked up the room, eyeing every fluttering fair one as he paſſed, and with a gay laughing air, making his remarks on each; his obſequious companion quite of his opinion, even though his mother or ſiſters ſhould be the object of his mirth.——When they came facing us, his highneſs made a full ſtop —Miſs Walgrove bluſhed—Miſs Anſtruther adjuſted her tucker, I with great compoſure ſtole a glance at him, curious to ſee what kind of figure the man was, of whom I had heard ſo much; for as I have been very little in publick, it was the firſt time I had

ever

ever been favoured with a ſight of him—He gazed for a few moments in ſilent admiration.—Yes, Sophy, his looks ſpoke admiration—then advancing to Lord Somerville. Come here, my lord, cried he, perhaps, you can give me ſome account of that angelick creature.—For heaven's ſake, tell me who is ſhe.—Your grace means Miſs Walgrove, I ſuppoſe, anſwered he; it is not long ſince ſhe returned from France.——Miſs Walgrove, ſaid the duke, upon my ſoul, ſhe is the fineſt creature I ever beheld. You muſt introduce me to her, Somerville. I muſt engage her for my partner—My lord bowed, but appeared a little chagreened. You are to know, Sophy, he had already engaged her for himſelf.—As they ſtood at no great diſtance from us, I could over-hear all they ſaid;

for his grace did not affect to whiſper his compliments. — Miſs Anſtruther heard him too, and envy ſat perched on her contracted brow.—The duke, now took my lord by the arm; come, Somerville, you muſt ſpeak for me; for, inviting as her beauties are, there is at the ſame time a modeſt dignity in her air, that forbids a too familiar approach.—My lord was leading him up to the delighted Walgrove——What woman would not have been delighted to be ſo diſtinguiſhed!——Where the duce are you dragging me to, cried his grace, 'tis here, looking at me — my eyes — my heart — muſt ever center. There, exclaimed my lord, with an air of aſtoniſhment—then, I have entirely miſunderſtood your grace; that is my wife.—Your wife, repeated the other; then, Somerville, all I can

ſay

ſay is, that you are the happieſt man in England; but were ſhe wife to the Grand Seignior, I muſt and will dance with her; in a civil way, added he, archly——aye, my lord, don't be jealous, but I ſhall certainly be tempted to make love to her. Madam, ſaid he, turning to me, your lord and maſter, or rather your ſlave—for ſure, all our ſex muſt be your ſlaves, gives me leave, to beſeech the honour of your hand for the evening. What an enviable mortal is he, who is honoured with it for life! What vanity is here, cries my Sophy; and for what——for ſuch bombaſt——ſuch common-place compliments—Huſh, child, worſe compliments than thoſe might paſs, when coming from the lips of a duke; beſides, they were uttered with ſuch an air of humorous drollery, that it was



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impoſſible to be offended—offended, do I ſay—is that my gratitude for the diſtinction he honoured me with; a diſtinction, which made half the women in the room turn pale with envy. Even Miſs Walgrove's ſmiles were a little conſtrained;—but when he led me forth—when we exhibited our figures in a minuet.——Come, I will not check my pen, theſe are the days of my vanity—a buzzing whiſper ran round the room. It is Lady Somerville—I was more proud of that name, than the encomiums that followed. But, O Sophy, what was my tranſport, when, on reſuming my ſeat, the dear Somerville, preſſing my hand, with a look all tenderneſs and love; you have charmed me, my ſweet Caroline; you have charmed every body; you are all elegance and grace—never in my life, did

I ex-

I experience ſo delightful an emotion. I ſmiled my gratitude—with what raptures could I have claſped the dear flatterer to my fluttering heart. But I was obliged to reſtrain its emotions—the duke had ſet the example, of courſe, every one followed it. Every eye was fixed on me, and on me alone—What a whim—do you recollect me, Sophy? Come, pray rub up your memory, and do not encourage that incredulity; it is fact, I aſſure you—I began the country dances——a Scots tune; and with all the life and ſpirit I was miſtreſs of—and for what, think you, did I take all this pains to ſhine?—from a very unfaſhionable motive—muſt I bluſh to own it, my dear girl—with no other deſign, I do aſſure you, but to pleaſe my huſband.—Fye, fye, what a falling off is here; when I

ſeemed in ſo fair a way to commence the fine lady—there is no help for it—the town air has not yet been able to diveſt me of my ruſtick notions; tho' by this letter, you will have ſome hopes of my improvement.—Shall I repeat ſome of the many fine things, my illuſtrious partner ſaid to me.—No, for heaven's ſake ſpare me, you cry—well then, let me introduce a lover to you.—A lover—Yes, child, I am determined he ſhall love you, though he never loved before; he is juſt the kind of man I would wiſh to be deeply ſmitten with your charms.—Now are you all impatience and eager curioſity—but, hark! my dear, don't be too haſty in diſmiſſing poor Audley, as you ſometimes affect to call him; for this new match is not above half made: however,

ever, give me leave to preſent to you Captain Edward Stanhope, with his languiſhing blue eyes, white teeth, and the fineſt hair in the world, tall, genteel, and elegant.—I never was more prejudiced in favour of any one, on ſo ſhort an acquaintance.—Lord Somerville knew him at Eton; they were violent friends in their boyhood, nor did their intimacy ceaſe, till the Captain was ordered abroad, and my lord about the ſame time ſet out on his travels; the former has been but a few days in town. My Somerville ſaw him for the firſt time at laſt night's Ridotto—he inſtantly recollected him—he ruſhed through the croud, ſeized his hand, and led him up to me. Captain Stanhope, ſaid he, there is no man on earth I have a greater regard

for.—I deſire, Caroline, you will receive him, as the friend I moſt highly eſteem. You may gueſs, after ſuch an introduction, what reception he met from me.—You have heard I was married, no doubt, reſumed his lordſhip, ſmiling: you, Ned, are more diſcreet, and chuſe to look before you leap; but don't reflect too much neither, or I fear, you will never follow your friend's example in that point. While he ſpoke, the Captain was eyeing Miſs Walgrove, who ſtood near him.—Take care Stanhope, cried my Lord, that is a dangerous object; how do you feel yourſelf after that ſtedfaſt gaze?—Perfectly well, returned the other, ſmiling, my heart is not made of ſuch combuſtible matter as your's. What, ſtill inſenſible!—Thou art the

hap-

happieſt fellow in the world.—Sill inſenſible, my Lord, but I do not eſteem myſelf much the happier for that; and yet, as I am circumſtanced, I ought, perhaps, to be thankful; for what I ſometimes accuſe as the cauſe of a laſſitude, an inſipidity which hangs about me.—As you are, Stanhope, know when you are well, and never ſollicit a viſit from the little ſpiteful deity, who takes a pleaſure in diſturbing our repoſe; let fortune be the idol of thy worſhip.—And ſhe, my Lord, is full as blind and ſpiteful as the other; I have long ceaſed to court her ſmiles. Don't you dance, ſaid my Lord?——No, I am lazy.—Come, if you will follow my advice, I'll put you in an eaſy way to make your fortune—Have you any objections to

ten thouſand pounds.—Not one.—Well then, there ſits moping and neglected, the owner of that ſum; ſhe is my couſin too. Prithee, Ned, take compaſſion on the mortified virgin; but be moderate in your civility, leſt ſhe whip you into a poſt chaiſe, and run away with you; for faith, 'tis catch as catch can now-a-days—ſnaps the word, and the honeſt damſel has not a moment to loſe. Come, let me introduce you to her. Away they went; but the looks of Miſs Anſtruther on this occaſion beggars all deſcription, ſo ſimpering, ſo amazed, ſo much more than delighted, one everlaſting grin immediately took poſſeſſion of her features, and for the whole evening, her ſable teeth, which, by the confuſion in which they are placed, ſeemed likewiſe to

be

be dancing, were diſplayed.—With what a toſſed head and ſwimming air did ſhe join the ſet; caſting a look of triumph as ſhe paſſed Miſs Walgrove, who, upon the whole, was not in ſpirits —Heavens! I heard ſome of the fair ones exclaim, is that charming fellow actually going to figure away with that ſtarched winter-faced virgin! what on earth could be his inducement! Is it poſſible, I ſhould let this pretty fellow ſo long run away with my pen, without one word of my dear duke, who, if I may take his word for it, is expiring, deſpairing, dying for my ladyſhip—but I am a generous creature, Sophy; no ſooner did I ſet eyes on this handſome military beau, than you engroſſed my whole thoughts. He muſt, he ſhall add to the liſt of your admirers; he

he is juſt the kind of man you'd like —nay, I have abſolutely diſcovered a ſtriking reſemblance between you; take this as the higheſt compliment I can pay you, for he likewiſe ſtrongly reſembles my Somerville.—Now I am again, by the returning tenderneſs of this dear Somerville, reconciled to matrimony. I ſhall uſe my endeavours to promote it among my friends; but his fortune—aye, there's the rub—not large I fear; and you, I no leſs fear, will have no fondneſs for carrying a knapſack.—I muſt enquire a little more particularly into the ſtate of affairs—he dines with us to-day.—As I live'tis near three o'clock—what a ſcribbler—but 'tis an age ſince I was in ſuch a flow of ſpirits. No time to tell you how my partner looked and ſighed at parting,

ing, nor the tender engaging behaviour of my Somerville, when we returned home.—O, Sophy, he is the moſt lovely, the moſt engaging of men—he will be true—all my doubts vaniſh, and I am at this moment the happieſt of women.—Adieu, I muſt go dreſs, for the reception of your intended lover.

LETTER

## LETTER XVII.

To Lady Somerville.

THIS is as it ſhould be. Keep it up, my ſweet friend! Your laſt dear letter has reſtored me to life. Now could I laugh heartily at all our ridiculous doubts and fears; for ridiculous I am convinced they were, and without the leaſt foundation. The man's a wag, it is true, and does not yet rightly know how to bend his ſtately neck to the yoke of matrimony: but what a rout, what a ſighing and whine-

ing

ing have we made about his amuſing himſelf with a little flirtation! I ſhall never forgive myſelf for encouraging you, as I have done, in the plaintives. What, did I not know you was married, not to an angel, but a man, a mere mortal man? Treat him as ſuch, keep up that charming flow of ſpirits. Do you not remember he once ſaid, goodneſs itſelf, if too uniform, would pall. Pr'ythee, child, never err on that ſide of the queſtion, when the contrary is ſo very eaſy—a little becoming caprice now and then by way of variety —you have hitherto been ſo gentle, ſo ſubmiſſive, ſo tractable — what a dead calm! Treat him now and then with a refreſhing breeze of life and gaiety, nay even a little pretty perverſeneſs. Why, child, no wonder he ſometimes

forgets

forgets he is ſhackled—matrimony and no altercation!—his will never oppoſed—how ſhould he remember he is a huſband? Go more into public—your domeſtic turn may excite his eſteem; but when he ſees you, when he hears all the world allow you to be the faireſt of ten thouſand fair, you will excite a yet ſofter paſſion in his breaſt. He has been accuſtomed to behold that ſly coquette, Walgrove, ſurrounded by admirers; while you, good houſewife like, ſit mopeing at home. There he leaves you, there he finds you. You rather upon the humdrums—his ſpirits exhauſted before he returns—he yawns, ſtretches, and goes to bed, and ſecretly accuſes you as the cauſe of his dullneſs and ſtupidity.

He

He ſays little to you, and you are at a a loſs what to ſay to him.

Go out, my dear, join the joyous, chatty crowd: the wiſeſt of us all are not always in a humour to converſe wiſely. A little trifling, a little bagatelle, now and then—O, there is no living without it! Go and learn from the modiſh beaux and belles that neceſſary qualification, ſmall talk. Go now and then, and let your Somerville ſee you ſhine ſuperior to the reſt in public. If he has forgot it, others will teach him to know the value of that jewel, of which he is the envied poſſeſſor. He will be more attentive, when he ſees the pretty fellows buzing round you. Do not think I want you to be a downright modern wife. Let

not

not your family concerns be neglected. Ah, I can poſitively no longer neglect the handſome Captain! Well, what ſaid you of your friend? Did he liſten with attention? Does he wiſh to ſee me? On my part, the match is half made. Audley is poſitively this very day to be diſmiſſed on the ſtrength of this conqueſt. He is like me, you ſay. O! it is a done thing, a match to all intents and purpoſes—blue eyes and white teeth—my very counter part!—You have no more to do, my dear, but pack him up in a frank, and ſend him off. As finances ſeem to be at a low ebb, that will be the cheapeſt way of travelling; and, if he is not even more than you deſcribe him to be, I ſhall be tempted not to grudge the poſtage.—

Where

Where lies his regiment? Cannot you get him diſpatched on a recruiting party? Send us this handſome Capt. Plume, and here I am his free-hearted Sylvia, ready to commence volunteer, to take up his napſack and beat my march; but let him come armed with ſword and piſtol, leſt poor forſaken Audley ſhould chooſe to loſe his brains —no, he may be run through the body, but his head, good ſoul, is impenetrable, nor has he any brains to loſe; but, in caſe he ſhould prefer that honourable exit, to dangling in his garters upon the willow-tree; for die he muſt when I diſmiſs him, were it only to convince me of the ſincerity of his love. For that reaſon, I ſay, let my knight come, armed at all points. Though ſhould revenge and deſpair kindle a

ſpark

ſpark of courage in the honeſt man, and ſhould that courage prick him on to a challenge—yet I fancy Audley will

Soon make the fight become a chace,
——— and then ———
They win the day, who win the race;

in that I am ſure he will come off victorious, if the weight of his head does not retard the lightneſs of his heels. You will think my head has not much ſolidity to boaſt at preſent — no, my dear, both my head and heart are, at this moment, light as a feather—almoſt all the ſpirits you had robbed me of, came back to me in your laſt letter. Let my Captain bring the reſt. I wait his coming with impatience; not a word more will I ſay, till I ſee him; for him I treaſure up all my wit,

that

that is the reaſon you will find no good things in this letter. You muſt give me credit for a thouſand, which I could have ſaid; but they are all packed up in one corner of my brain, to be to my beau delivered with a proper grace, on demand. Now don't, for your life, hint any thing to him about this ſame wit — a wit—my ſtars, what an idea would he form of me!—A tall raw-bon'd ungain virgin of thirty, with pert little eyes, ſallow complexion, and ſharp noſe; that noſe and upper lip, plentifully adorned with Spaniſh ſnuff: in ſhort, a ſecond Miſs Anſtruther, and then, when we meet, he will be racking his brain for ſomething ſmart to ſay to me; while I ſhall anſwer him with all imaginable dulneſs and ſtupidity——he will not meet with flaſh for flaſh, or daſh for daſh——in vain for

will he pauſe, and eye me with a look that ſays, now, Madam, let me hear a good thing in my turn.—What a ridiculous ſcene—I could die with laughing at the bare idea—keep clear of wit then as you value my favour; but give me as much good nature as you pleaſe. Theſe lords of the creation are very jealous of their power; they regard a woman, who dares to make any pretenſion to a more than common underſtanding, as encroaching on their prerogative; they look upon her as a rival; and as they have been pleaſed in their wiſdom to endue us, with the name of the weaker veſſel, ſo they are apt to think we deſert our province, a province which it was their will and pleaſure to allot us, when we attempt to vie with them in excellences,

they

they wiſh to arrogate to themſelves—if we are two degrees removed from a fool, they then pretend we are not ſufficiently feminine; for to that character they have complaiſantly annexed the idea of ſoftneſs and ſimplicity; the very higheſt encomiums they beſtow on us is, that of agreeable triflers, in whoſe company they can unbend their minds after their ſage ſtudies. They do, indeed, ſo effectually on theſe occaſions leave their wiſdom behind them—in their cloſets, we muſt ſuppoſe—that it would be hard to ſay, whoſe converſation is moſt inſipidly inſignificant—the triflers, or thoſe who come to be trifled with;—but then we are taught to give them credit for a prodigious deal of ſenſe and learning amongſt themſelves. —I wiſh, they would now and then,

by way of variety, favour us with a ſpecimen—but they, I ſuppoſe, eſteem ignorance the mother of devotion, and think the leſs we know of them, the more implicitly we ſhall ſubmit to their power.—They are much to be commended for this caution; for the more inſignificant the idol, the more miſtery, the more ambiguity does it require to keep alive any reverence, for what, if expoſed to inſpection, would be deſpiſed—but how I run on. I was not to ſay one word more, an age ago.—I have caught the contagion of your high ſpirit, and I could prattle till—till you are heartily weary of liſtening to me; are you not already ſo?—Yes—I commend your ſincerity—Well, *Fait mès* baiſmain, to my Beaux, and adieu—Your lord and maſter may depend on my

my taking him to taſk ſooner or later, for all his rogueries——tell him ſo, and bid him muſter his forces, and prepare for the attack. No compliments to him, till he ſets the example, and is a little more complaiſant to our ſex; for complaiſant we will allow him to be; but there let him ſtop at his peril.—Farewel, my ſweet friend, happineſs unmixed with doubts and fears attend you. Never more expect to be encouraged in them by your

SOPHY.

## LETTER XVIII.

### To SOPHY.

I Am grown an abſolute rake. Your intended lover is commenced my Ciceſbeo. Don't be jealous. You have no reaſon, when I tell you he ſtays here with reluctance. Where does he want to go?—Don't be vain neither—it is not to you, Sophy. He has, it ſeems, two amiable ſiſters in the country, whom he dies with impatience to ſee; but buſineſs detains him in

in town. He wants to change into another regiment. My dear Somerville is uſing all his intereſt for his promotion. Never man deſerved promotion better. I can diſcover but one fault in him—an inſenſible heart, and only inſenſible to love. Even your praiſe, with which I frequently entertain him, can hardly excite the ſlighteſt emotion. But do not be too much mortified, when he beholds thoſe lovely eyes of thine, thoſe eyes ſo like his own. They will, I ſtill flatter myſelf, tenderly greet each other. I have ſet my heart upon the match; for till now I never ſaw the man — my own man excepted — whom I thought worthy of my friend. I am not, my dear Sophy, half ſo high-ſpirited as when I laſt wrote; and yet.

I am much more happy, inexpreſſibly happy, in the tenderneſs of my Somerville's behaviour to me. Since the firſt hour of our marriage, I never knew him ſo inſinuatingly engaging; but my pleaſures are never to be without alloy: he has for ſome time paſt been uncommonly thoughtful, he ſighs frequently, and now and then I catch him gazing on me with ſuch ſoft, ſuch compaſſionate looks, they pierce my heart. Yeſterday, as I ſet at work on the ſettee, my little girl by my ſide, he ſat reading at a table near me. On raiſing my head, after a long ſilence, during which I imagined him intent on his ſtudy, I found him leaning on his elbow, his fine intelligent eyes fixed on my face, with ſuch a moving air of ſadneſs, that tears inſtantly ſtarted into mine.

mine. I haſtily aroſe, I preſſed his dear hand between mine, I held it to my heart—O my Somerville, you are not happy! Speak, my deareſt lord, or I ſhall die with grief!—My gentle, my obliging Caroline, I am happier than I deſerve to be in your love. Do not afflict yourſelf, my ſweet girl, remember, whatever appearances there may, or has been to the contrary, that you ever was, and will be, dear to your Somerville. — He claſped me in his arms. I was going to beg he would open his heart to me, when we were interrupted,—(ah, Sophy, when ſhall I find ſo favourable an opportunity!) by the enterance of Capt. Stanhope. I had hardly time to diſengage myſelf from his kind incircling arms, before

the Captain entered. How do I rejoice, ſaid the amiable young man, on being witneſs to your happineſs; you make me in love with matrimony. Who would not be ſo, that ſees ſuch a charming family ſcene of love and harmony? But, as few can deſerve the bleſſing, ſo few are born to the poſſeſſion of a wife like your's. You ſay juſtly, my dear Ned, that few can deſerve a woman like my Caroline; and, perhaps, added he, ſighing, the man who is thus diſtinguiſhed is the leaſt worthy of all others.—You do not expect a compliment, my lord, returned the other, ſmiling. You cannot expect one from me, who am perhaps the leaſt addicted to flattery of any man in England; but, much as I eſteem lady Somerville, you will not eaſily perſuade me ſhe has beſtowed

ſtowed herſelf unworthily. My lord ſhook his head: no flattery is ſo pleaſing, as that which is delivered with that kind of blunt ſincerity you affect, or rather that is natural to you; but I wiſh, Ned, you may not one day retract, and think you have over-rated my merit. Let me however, while I can, retain your favourable opinion. How goes on your affairs? Rather ſlowly, my lord; too ſlowly for the impetuoſity of my temper. To-morrow I leave them to take their own courſe, while I purſue mine. I can no longer reſiſt the ardent deſire I have to ſee my dear ſiſters after an age of abſence. I do not wonder at your impatience, Ned; they are moſt amiable women; I ſhould like to be of your party. I wonder if my little blooming Fanny is

as lovely and as arch, as when I was laſt tempted to make her a preſent of my heart. I cannot conceive, how I eſcaped the faſcinating charms of the ſweet ſmiling gipſy.—Do you remember, how many excurſions we made from Eaton?——O, Ned, thoſe were happy days!—Youth, health, ſpirits, and freedom.—I underſtand that ſly glance, Caroline; do not think I complain of my fetters; no woman on earth could have impoſed on me more eaſy ones than your's. But I would not adviſe my friend to be in too much haſte to put on any, be they ever ſo inviting, even though they were chains of gold. Nay, theſe are the worſt of all, Cupid's alone are ſupportable; but before a man ſhould ſubmit even to thoſe ſilken bands, I would have

him

him look about him a little, to be certain, he knows his own mind firſt; for we are variable mortals, and one falſe ſtep leads to a thouſand more.—Your advice is admirable, cried Stanhope, laughing; but example will ever go farther than precept, and would my circumſtances admit of ſuch a ſtep—but this want of money is the d—l——I ſhould certainly be ambitious of treading that flowery path you have marked out for me, and in which I am convinced, you experience ſo much felicity; what different ſenſation muſt you feel, on returning home to a fond endearing wife, who receives you with ſmiles of ſweet complacency, and a little blooming cherub, the image of yourſelf, from what a poor diſconſolate fellow like me feels, on entering my deſolate lodgings,

without one kind friend to welcome my return, to ſooth my griefs, or ſhare my joys ?—Upon my word, Captain, you improve amazingly; what bright fair one has inſpired you with thoſe happy ſentiments ? Whoſe charms may one aſk, has wrought this delightful change ? Surely matrimony cannot be far off; your ſtile is wonderfully improved, you are already more than half a huſband. You may thank yourſelf, Madam, you have prepared my heart for the reception of the belle paſſion, you have cleared away the rubbiſh of prejudice, and put to flight all my common-place arguments in favour of Batchelloriſm; you have now, Madam, only to aſſiſt me in the ſearch of a proper object to fill up the void that ſtill remains in that, in ſpite of all my

endeavours—inſenſible heart——that will be the moſt difficult taſk. You are too nice in your taſte.—Not at all, I have formed no particular idea of the fair one that would pleaſe me; all I inſiſt on is, ſome delicacy, ſome ſentiment;—for her perſon, I am not quite a Platonic, I would wiſh it, at leaſt, to be agreeable, not in my opinion only, but in the judgment of others: does your Ladyſhip know ſuch a one?——I could have named one who more than anſwers his deſcription, but time and patience, Sophy; let the man judge for himſelf.——Sentiment and delicacy, cried my lord—What ſay you to my couſin? But her perſon muſt be agreeable, you ſay, not only in your eyes, but in that of others. Now, could you but prevail on

your-

yourſelf to think it ſo, would the little god but tie his bandage tight enough over your's, I could name one, at leaſt, who thinks that ſame withered perſon beats every thing of the kind, for beauty and grace; you may eaſily gueſs who I mean, and don't be vain; ſhe is, I can tell you, little leſs enamoured of your's.—You have already been the Damon of three paſtorals; in the laſt, you are piping under a ſhady tree, while ſhe, crook in hand, ſtands liſtening to your ſoothing melody.—Here he was interrupted by the entrance of Lady Ann Conyer, and her daughter, who came to make a morning viſit. Lady Ann is a moſt agreeable woman, ſenſible, well-bred, and diſcreet; ſhe has ſince ſhe became a widow refuſed ſeveral advantageous offers, that ſhe might

might give herſelf wholly to the education of her ſweet Harriot, who is a fine tall blooming girl of about ſeventeen, and has the moſt engaging timidity in her manner, with a face, which, without regularity of features, charms every beholder; by that air of ſenſibility of intelligence, which in no face I ever ſaw, ſhines more conſpicuous.—After the uſual compliments, Lady Ann told me, the Duke of—— gives to-morrow night a grand maſquerade ball; aſked if I was to be there, and if ſo, would be glad to be of my party.—She had hardly ſpoke, when a ſervant entered, and delivered me a card from his grace, to beg my Ladyſhip, and the ladies who were with me at the Ridotto, would honour him with our preſence on the occaſion.

—Did

—Did I not tell you, Sophy, I ſhould, nay, that I am already grown a rake; 'tis my Lord's fault, he will make me racquet about; he poſitively inſiſts on my accepting his Grace's invitation. While we were ſettling this point, Stanhope, and Miſs Conyers, amuſed themſelves, by examining a fine drawing my Lord has lately purchaſed. I was delighted to ſee his pretty companion ſo little intereſt herſelf about the ball; an affair ſo important to ſome women, that I am perſuaded, half the invited belles will hardly cloſe their eyes, till the happy night is over.—Our Captain made the ſame remark when ſhe was gone, and ſpoke of her with ſo much warmth, that, upon my word, Sophy, I am half jealous for you.—He ſtaid and ſpent the day with us; but as I am

teized

teized with giving orders about my habit, which is to be the moſt elegant thing of the kind, I have not time to repeat the agreeable converſation, during a day, which was not dim'd with one cloud of ſadneſs.—Adieu, to morrow will, I ſuppoſe, furniſh materials for a little volume. I ſhall then ſupply you with chit chat, that may amuſe your country circles for a month to come.

Your's ever.

LETTER

## LETTER XIX.

### To SOPHY.

SOPHY, I am fatigued to death, my ſpirits exhauſted, uneaſy, reſtleſs.—What is this vain world, ſince this is generally the conſequence of what are called its pleaſures!—Will you excuſe the deſcription of this maſquerade.—No, you cry, poſitively, no.—Well, my promiſe is given, you ſhall be humoured; but can you, Sophy, be ſatisfied with that amuſement at ſecond hand, which gave me ſo little, who enjoyed it in all its perfection.—

No

No more preface do you ſay.—Come then, lend me your attention; what would I not do to oblige my ſweet friend.—I need not aſk, if I muſt give you ſome account of our dreſſes.—We women, my dear, do not think that ſubject ſo very immaterial, as perhaps we ought. Mine was really elegant. Could it be otherwiſe, when my Lord condeſcended to direct my taſte: it was a kind of Turkiſh habit; the petticoat ſilver tiſſue, flounced with ſilver blond. I need not be particular; if you'll look into Lady Mary Wortley's travels, you will ſee a more juſt deſcription, how the Mahometan ladies decorate themſelves, than I have at preſent leiſure or inclination to give you. Mine was exactly what ſhe there deſcribes Fatima's to be.—My hair was dreſſed to

great advantage, and adorned with a profuſion of jewels. My Lord told me, I made ſo pretty an infidel, that for my ſake he was almoſt tempted to turn Muſſelman; and then, added he, with an arch ſmile, polygamy comes of courſe.——O then, my Lord, ſaid I, taking his hand, I will excuſe you from that piece of complaiſance; for were I even ſure I ſhould be one of your *Houries* in the next world, I would much rather have you all to myſelf in this. —— Miſs Walgrove was preſent; ſhe bluſhed —— but affecting a gay air, you are then a Turk only in appearance. I find, ſaid ſhe, tapping my cheek, tho' one might accuſe you of a little of their cruelty, for wiſhing to monopolize ſo very pretty a fellow.—My Lord looked at her. I

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did not like that look;—and yet at all times, ah, Sophy, his are but too inſinuatingly lovely.—You'll chide me, you prohibit all fears, doubts, and ſo forth.—Very hard, but patience, child. I am going to lay the ſtate of the caſe before you, then judge for yourſelf. I will not, if in the power of mortal woman, be jealous till—Heaven avert the fatal hour, till then I will, if poſſible, be blind, inſenſible and blind.—Miſs Walgrove wore a Spaniſh habit, which ſhewed her delicate form to the greateſt advantage; her petticoat pink and ſilver, her jacket black velvet, buttoned at the wriſt with diamonds, her linen the richeſt point, her fine hair diſplayed to the greateſt advantage; on one ſide of her head, a large black feather, her jewels placed with taſte

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and elegance.—'Tis impoſſible to imagine a more ſtriking figure.—Come, ſaid ſhe, ſmiling, and curtſying to my Lord, I can tell you, we all expect a compliment as well as your lady. Nay, according to modern good breeding, her's ſhould have come laſt, if at all; however, better late than never. Now, what ſay you to me, and your couſin here, who is, I think, as compleat an Arcadian as ever weilded a crook?—I ſay, Madam, to you, returned he, preſſing her hand, that for the ſake of my Bella Signora, I would venture my neck in ſcaling rope-ladders; murder half a hundred jealous dons, only for the happineſs of throwing myſelf at your feet.—As for my couſin, continued he, laughing, ſhe really, as you ſay, weilds her crook with an air ſo

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formidable, that I'll anſwer for it, neither ſheep nor ſhepherd will venture to come within arms length of her. The half angry virgin ſcrewed up her mouth. Miſs Walgrove might have ſpoke for herſelf, only there is nobody elſe, that I know of, who would like her condeſcend to fiſh for a compliment. No, no, we are not come to that time a day yet; nor are we, my arch couſin, diſappointed, when we do not meet with them. All I know is, that I ſhould be ſorry if my formidable air, as you are pleaſed to call it, did not keep people at a rather more diſcreet diſtance, than ſome folks deem neceſſary.——I think, my dear, ſhe had in this rather the whip hand of her, as Kitty ſays.—Some folks looked a little diſconcerted on the occaſion; and I may add,

add, ſome folks a little enjoyed their confuſion.—You may gueſs by what paſſed, that Miſs Anſtruther had aſſumed her paſtoral garb; her jacket yellow ſattin, her petticoat ſcarlet and gold, her jet black hair plaited, and about as thick as my finger, tied with a large bow of yellow ribbon, hung (but it was not long enough to hang far) down her back; round her head, a garland of artificial flowers intermixed with jewels; a wreath of the ſame round her taper waiſt—her crook adorned with a profuſion of ribbons—take her, *tout en ſemble*, ſhe beggars all deſcription—Lady Brathwait wore the habit—but ſhe is not yet determined to take the vows; a very comfortable plump little nun ſhe made, not in the leaſt emaciated by faſting

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and prayer. Lady Ann repreſented, and with great dignity, a Roman matron. Her daughter, ſweet girl, looked charmingly, and with an innocent, modeſt ſimplicity in her air, that exactly correſponded with her dreſs, appeared as a Quaker—never was a fairer. Lord George Sinclair was her beau, and if I am not much miſtaken, her very ſincere admirer.—He wore a black Domino, determined not to be gaudy, ſince his pretty miſtreſs was ſo plain.—Now, for my graceful Spaniard, my lovely Somerville; but no deſcription can do him juſtice, 'tis preſumption to attempt it—imagine every think that is moſt ſeducingly engaging, and after all, imagine that he is far ſuperior to your brighteſt ideas of elegance and manly beauty.—We ſet off,

Lady Ann, our little Quaker, her admirer, and my ladyſhip, in one coach, lady Brathwait, Miſs Walgrove, Miſs Anſtruther, and my lord, in another. —Here I pauſe, and muſt again apply to your lively imagination. Figure to yourſelf the moſt ſuperb, the moſt magnificent apartments, crouded with the moſt brilliant company; the Duke, I don't know how he diſcovered me; almoſt on my firſt entrance ſingled me out, and engaged me for his partner; he hardly left me a moment during the whole entertainment. I ſoon loſt all my company, except the obliging and diſcreet lady Ann, who made it her buſineſs to keep near me; how much am I indebted to her, her preſence was a great ſupport to my ſpirits. I was really flurried, a hundred people were ſpeaking

ing to me at once; and it would have required more wit than I am miſtreſs of, only to have anſwered the duke, who ſaid a thouſand agreeable things, and who has an uncommon ſhare of vivacity.—Agreeable, did I call them. —No, my dear, I ſhall never be reconciled to your modiſh gallantry:—there is ſomething ſhocking in it. The duke made down-right love to me. I durſt not reſent ſuch an indignity, as I wiſhed to have done, ſince I ſuppoſe it is the cuſtom.—I only now and then put him in mind that I was married—He laughed, and do you think now, my charmer, ſaid he, that Somerville repulſes the advances which are made to him, with ſuch an old-faſhioned objection? May be not, anſwered I, but I fancy he would have no objec-

tion to his wife's keeping that circumſtance a little in view. O, he is too polite, too gallant a huſband, my angel, to abridge his wife of innocent liberties! I dare ſay, he would not, ſir; but, if you fancy liſtening to improper profeſſions of love from another man are amongſt that number, I fear we ſhall never agree in our opinions. Was you ever in Paris, my charmer? Taking my hand. Never, ſir — withdrawing it. Then you poſitively want nothing to make you the moſt irreſiſtable creature in nature, but a trip to that gay metropolis: we ſhould underſtand one another a thouſand times better after ſuch a jaunt. I underſtand French already, ſaid I, laughing. Aye, but the French manners, my deareſt creature! Travelling now-a-days is as neceſſary

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to form a compleat modern fine lady, as a fine gentleman.—Why, I believe, ſir, the accompliſhments they bring home with them on theſe occaſions are pretty much the ſame, though I think neither of them need go ſo far for folly and vices, which with leſs trouble they might make ſhift to pick up at home.—Lady Ann now joined in the converſation, and ſaid a thouſand ſenſible lively things on the ſubject. But I am beginning to be tireſomely minute, ſo ſhall not repeat them.—I was glad ſhe relieved me; for my ſpirits were almoſt exhauſted, by talking to ſo many different people.—I was now allowed a few moments ſilence: that time was employed in ſearching with my eyes every corner of the room, to ſee if I could find my Somerville, and

the reſt of my friends.—No very eaſy taſk. At laſt, for, great as the crowd was, his majeſtic figure could not be concealed nor miſtaken for any other; I diſcovered him ſeemingly in earneſt converſation with the happy Walgrove. What would I have given to over-hear their *tete à tete!* By degrees, I made my way through the gay mob, ſlyly giving his grace the ſlip, and without being perceived by my lord, threw myſelf, not a little fatigued, on a window-ſeat almoſt cloſe at his elbow.—O, my lord, all your eloquence cannot deſcribe my fears, ſaid Miſs Walgrove; if he is not yet arrived, that time cannot be far off; he does not, indeed, mention it in his teazing letters, but he wants to ſurpriſe me, and ſuppoſe—O I cannot bear the thoughts of ſeeing him—

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of being tormented with his now odious love. There is then no other reſource but what you propoſe. And yet I ſhudder at the thoughts of that. Ah, what have I done! but your honour, your tenderneſs!—How am I infatuated!—You may, my angel, ſafely rely on that honour, returned he, preſſing her hand. But, let us talk no more on this dear intereſting ſubject, we may be overheard.—He led her by that fair hand, which he ſtill preſſed between his, to another part of the room.—I ſoon loſt ſight of them.—Now, Sophy, what ſay you to all this?—Guilty or not guilty?—Yet I will ſtill flatter myſelf, if poſſible, that there may be nothing more than friendſhip between them.—But, your honour, ſaid ſhe.—She has, perhaps, acknow-

ledged a hopeleſs paſſion for him; but confiding in his honour, truſts he will not take advantage of her weakneſs. Will it bear that interpretation, my friend? Fain would I believe them guiltleſs, at leaſt, as to the laſt fatal ſtep; but how long they may be able to keep their paſſion.——Ah, let me not ſay *their* paſſion! Let it be her's only, or I ſhall die with anguiſh.—I know not what I ſay, I am half diſtracted with apprehenſion, whenever I touch upon this ſubject.—Then what means ſhe, by the laſt reſource?—At the thoughts of which ſhe ſhudders—There I am again bewildered in doubts and fears.—Come, I will not dwell on this hateful topic.——Time, ah! the miſtery will be but too ſoon unravelled.—Heaven muſt diſpoſe of your

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unhappy friend as it ſees fit. Yes, Sophy, I own myſelf ſo. I cannot for my life be happy: How ſhould I? But, I ſaid, I would change the ſubject.—I will, I will, pr'ythee bear with me a little.—Where was I?—What was I ſaying?—O, that they left me!——In a few moments, two gentlemen came up to where I ſat, one of them for ſome time examined me with the greateſt attention.—At laſt, it muſt be her, cried he, turning to his companion; for who but my angel can boaſt a form like that; and that ſhe is here I am confidently aſſured.—I flatter myſelf, my ſearch is now at an end. I give you joy, replied the other, and may now, I ſuppoſe, leave you to the pleaſure of your tranſporting diſcovery.—Without anſwering, the

firſt drawing nearer, he attempted to take my hand; though love is ſaid to be blind, cried he, yet the heart by a ſecret ſympathy, in ſpite of all diſguiſe, will find out the object of its tender attachment. I cannot!—ah, do not tell me I am deceived! Will thoſe lovely, thoſe averted eyes, refuſe to welcome their adoring.——I am afraid, Sir, interrupted I, you will not find that ſympathy of which you boaſt ſo very infallible as you ſeem to imagine. You was going to reveal your name, but you need not to convince me, that both your perſon and voice are utter ſtrangers to me.—And do not you, Madam, ſpeak in a feigned voice? Sweet as it is, yet I muſt ſtill flatter myſelf, you could charm me, with one whoſe melody, would, in ſpite of that ſweetneſs,

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be yet more grateful to my delighted ears.—For heaven's ſake, remove that envious cloud that obſcures the ſplendor of your beauty. Let me—O, permit the hand of love to put aſide your maſk. I repulſed his inſolent attempt, and endeavoured to make my eſcape; but he ſeized my hand. Only one word, Madam, and if I am deceived, I will humbly on my knees ſollicit your pardon, for an almoſt involuntary offence; tell me, for heaven's ſake tell me truly, are you not the lovely Miſs Walgrove.——Tell me firſt, cried I, ſtruggling to diſengage my hand, are not you Sir Harry Villiers.—Then, it is, my angel.—O, my deareſt creature, why, ſince you knew it was your Harry, would you attempt thus cruelly to fly me; do I deſerve a reception

like this, after an age of abſence, an age of conſtant unabated love? but you are changed, regardleſs of your vows: Ah, I but too plainly diſcovered this fatal change, by the altered ſtile of your letters.—Take care, Sir, cried I, laughing; I muſt check the overflowings of your heart, you ought firſt to know, if I am a fit perſon to be truſted with ſuch important ſecrets.—Yet do not be too much alarmed for your indiſcretion; you could not, I aſſure you, have been more fortunate in the choice of a confidant.—Heaven and earth, Madam, this is carrying your cruel raillery too far.—Oh, my Charlotte, ſoftening his voice into the utmoſt tenderneſs, how can you thus trifle with a heart that beats but for you. Come a little this way, ſaid I,

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and I will ſet that throbbing heart at eaſe.—I really, Sophy, felt myſelf intereſted for this man; and as you will eaſily believe heartily wiſhed his paſſion ſucceſs.——He followed me to the moſt retired part of the room; there now, ſaid I, drawing aſide my maſk, will you credit your eyes.—Ah, Madam, I am cruelly convinced, and beg a thouſand pardons; but though I offended in a feigned character, it is but juſt, I ſhould make an apology in my own; ſo ſaying, he took off his, and to my no ſmall ſurpriſe, diſcovered a face, the perfect reſemblance of that picture, which had once given me no ſmall uneaſineſs, and which again begins to take poſſeſſion of me.——On finding it to be, what before I only ſuſpected, that of Sir Harry Villiers.

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—You find, Madam, continued he, you was not miſtaken in your conjectures; but, how you came to know me, ſince I do not remember ever to have had the honour of ſeeing a face, which if once ſeen could never be forgot, is to me a miſtery—the only way I can account for it, is by flattering myſelf, that I have followed my fair miſtreſs's example, in making you my confidant; and that ſhe has the happineſs to poſſeſs ſome ſhare of your friendſhip. Would to heaven you would likewiſe permit me to aſpire to that honour.—The picture ſtill ran in my head.—Without making any return to his compliment, I, hardly knowing what I ſaid, aſked, if he was acquainted with Lord Somerville?—Not very intimately, Madam, but I

have ſeen him frequently, while abroad on his travels.—I hear he is married, and to a moſt amiable——Stop your encomiums, Sir, I am that happy woman (not very happy neither, Sophy, *entre nous*) —And your ladyſhip knows—Miſs Walgrove——Yes, thought I, honeſt friend, to my coſt—I do—O then, for the love of heaven, condeſcend to guide me to her. I arrived in England but this morning. I heard of this entertainment. I heard ſhe was to be here.—Could a lover deſire a more powerful inducement to make one of the party. I have been here above two hours, and, bungler as I am, have not yet been able to diſcover her. Your ſize, Madam, your elegant form——Enough, Sir, interrupting him, I underſtand you; but I think

think you will not for the future place quite ſo much dependance in ſympathy. — He ſmiled.—But, ſir, continued I, you talked ſomething of vows.—I did, madam; I have the honour to be engaged to my charmer by the moſt ſolemn; nor did ſhe refuſe a mutual engagement, which, I flatter myſelf, ſhe will have no reluctance to fulfil.—I hope ſhe will not, returned I; but I am cruel thus to detain you. Come, let me lead you to her, whoſe company will make amends for the time you have trifled away with me. — He took my hand. How can I miſs the road to happineſs, ſaid he gallantly, when I have an angel for my guide!—Don't be too ſanguine in your hopes, honeſt man, thought I. When we again mixed with the croud, I found them

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all ranged in a circle. Every eye fixed on a graceful pair, who were at that moment exhibiting their elegant forms in a minuet; and who were they, think you? —No other than my Somerville, and the too charming Walgrove.—— Now, cried I, turning to my beau, what ſays ſympathy?—Heavens, madam, it is, it is my angel!—Ah, that is her graceful movement, her elegant ſhape, her lovely boſom, her delicate little foot! But who the devil is that happy raſcal?—Who! ſoftly, ſir, take care what you ſay; that majeſtic charming Spaniard has the honour to be my lord and maſter. The Lord be praiſed, madam, ſaid he; for I can tell you, I was beginning to experience a little of the Spaniard myſelf; but matrimony and your beauty is my ſecurity. Don't

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rely too much on them, thought I. The minuet ended while I ſpoke.—— Away he flew, and, without diſcovering himſelf, begged ſhe would dance a ſecond with him. Little ſuſpecting who he was, ſhe complied, and again acquitted herſelf with inimitable grace. Her happy partner ſeemed to tread on air: he is really a very handſome figure, and, except my lord's, I think I hardly ever ſaw a finer face. He danced too very genteelly; but who could appear to advantage after my Somerville? When they had finiſhed, he led his charming partner to where I was, and reſpectfully taking my hand, condeſcend, my good angel, ſaid he in a whiſper, to be a witneſs to the happineſs, for which I am in ſome meaſure indebted to you. Somerville,

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not much delighted, I ſuppoſe, to ſee him making off with his Dulcinea, followed us. He led her to a ſeat at the further corner of the room, where we could be moſt private, and there, haſtily pulling off his maſk, and preſſing Miſs Walgrove's hand to his lips, was going to give vent to his tranſports, when ſhe uttered a loud ſcream, ſunk into a chair, and fainted.—What have I done, cried he, my life, my ſoul, my charming Charlotte! ſupporting her in his arms.—What, indeed! interrupted Somerville paſſionately. Who are you, ſir? If you have dared to inſult that lady, by all that is good!—And who are you, ſir, turning fiercely round, that dare to queſtion me ſo rudely? I was frightened to death: the ſmelling-bottle, with which I was endeavouring

vouring to recover Miſs Walgrove, dropped from my trembling hand. — For heaven's ſake, my dear Somerville, it is Sir Harry Villiers! I hardly knew what I ſtammered out. — Sir Harry Villiers! repeated he, gazing at him; I beg his pardon—but the lady.—He advanced to her, and tenderly leaning her head on his breaſt, unfaſtened her maſk. Sir Harry was in too great a tremor and agitation to think of this neceſſary precaution. I wiſhed he had had more preſence of mind. I would rather he ſhould have done her that little piece of ſervice than the other. In the flurry, my lord's likewiſe dropped off, and the two fineſt faces in the world were again expoſed to view. How ſeducingly lovely did her's at that moment appear, in ſpite of her paleneſs.

neſs? I could ſee it was no ſmall ſelf-denial to my Somerville, to keep at a proper diſtance—His ſparkling eyes, as he hung over her enamoured, ſeemed to devour her charms.——Sir Harry was too intent on her recovery, to make this remark, he forgot every thing but her.——In ſpite of the croud that were gathered round us, he gave free vent to his emotions.—At laſt, ſhe opened her fine eyes, and raiſing them with tender languiſhment, met thoſe of my Lord. She bluſhed, and reluctantly withdrew them; then with an air of coldneſs, mixed with diſdain, ſhe looked at poor Villiers. You have, ſaid ſhe, in a half whiſper, finely expoſed both yourſelf and me; but I, Sir, may find a time to be revenged. —He appeared thunderſtruck at a

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ſpeech ſo mortifying, and the more ſo, as he had fondly attributed her emotions to the effect that was moſt flattering to his love.—Before he could collect his ſcattered ſenſes, to make her an anſwer, ſhe aroſe. I am ſorry, ladies and gentlemen, for the buſtle I have made; part of the blame ought to fall on that gentleman, for ſo unſeaſonably ſurpriſing me, when my ſpirits were weak and exhauſted.——Will you do me the favour, my lord, preſenting him her hand, to conduct me to lady Brathwait; ſhe will be ſo good as to go home with me?——Sir Harry, in the moſt tender manner, attempted to apologize for what had happened. Nothing could be more graceful, more reſpectful;—but ſhe deigned not to honour him with the

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ſlighteſt attention.—Never was ſorrow, reſentment, and deſpair, more ſtrongly painted on a face than his. He peremptorily inſiſted on being permitted to ſee her home; he could not leave her, he ſaid, till he had obtained her pardon. That may require ſome time, returned ſhe diſdainfully; as for your attendance, Sir Harry, I would not for the world take you ſo ſoon away from an aſſembly ſo agreeable, though you have interrupted my pleaſure, I would not wiſh to ſhorten your's. This gentleman,—and, I verily believe, ſhe preſſed his hand, by the look ſhe gave him—will be ſo good as ſee me to my Carriage.—Come, my Lord, let us endeavour to find Lady Brathwait.——I offered to go home with her; for, by this time, you may believe, I was heartily

heartily ſick of the entertainment; but the Duke, who unluckily joined us at that moment, interpoſed; and ſo politely, ſo earneſtly inſiſted on my ſtay, that on my Somerville's ſeconding his requeſt, I was obliged to comply, though with the greateſt reluctance. Lady Brathwait was ſoon found. My Lord whiſpered me, that he would return in a few minutes, and away went the ladies, he leading Miſs Walgrove.—Sir Harry determined not to loſe ſight of her, leading Lady Brathwait, and ſo ended the buſtle, but not the comments on it—it ſerved as converſation during the reſt of the evening; but I will not tire you with the remarks that were made on the occaſion. I believe, moſt of the ladies were not a little pleaſed to ſee the handſome Walgrove

ſo publickly mortified as it was viſible ſhe was.—But ah, Sophy, has ſhe not too much reaſon to be conſoled, convinced as ſhe muſt be, that—I will check my ungovernable pen, perhaps my fears are groundleſs.—My Lord returned agreeable to his promiſe, but I gueſſed, by the time he was abſent, that he had not left his charge, till he had ſeen her ſafe to his aunt's. After a ſlight enquiry, (for I could not ſo far play the hypocrite, as to appear extremely anxious about it,) after the Lady's health, I aſked what was become of poor Sir Harry?—Writing a penitential *billet doux* to his miſtreſs by this time, I ſuppoſe, anſwered he, negligently. How can you treat the affair with ſo much levity, I ſincerely pity him, and think Miſs Walgrove

expreſſed more reſentment than one might have expected, for an involuntary offence; eſpecially when one conſiders the footing they are on.—And I think nothing about the matter, cried he, turning from me with a careleſs air, and mixing amongſt the croud, left me with Lady Ann, and the Duke, who, in ſpite of all his vivacity, could hardly get a word out of me, for the reſt of the night. I believe, he thought me very ſtupid; but that gives me no manner of uneaſineſs.—At laſt, thank heaven, the party broke up.—His Grace condeſcended to lead me to our coach, into which I flung myſelf half dead with fatigue.—My Lord ſeated himſelf by me. He was in no better ſpirits than myſelf; we were ſilent almoſt the whole way home; he kindly

threw

threw his arms round me, and held one of my hands.——The tears of tender ſenſibility ſtole down my cheeks: he uttered frequent ſighs; but neither of us choſe to make each other the confidant of our thoughts. I fancy, if the truth were known, they were not very pleaſing.—I forgot to ſay any thing of our magnificent ſupper, &c.—But you may ſuppoſe, the entertainment was all of a-piece, ſuperfine to the laſt degree.—I ſpent a moſt reſtleſs night; nor was my beloved Somerville more compoſed; and once in his ſleep—ah, the remembrance of it makes my eyes overflow.—I heard him murmur out, O Caroline, forgive me, by heaven's I love you ſtill, dear gentle Caroline, do not weep.—Think what I felt—I could not help laying my cheek

close to his, and throwing my arms round him, though at the peril of waking him.—He arose early this morning, and I have not seen him since, though it is now near three o'clock.—I received a most polite card from the Duke, hoping I caught no cold, and so forth.—I know not what I have caught, but 'tis certain, I am neither in very good health nor spirits.—Adieu, my good girl, my true friend, I am weary of scribling, believe me.

Your's.

LET-

## LETTER XIX.

### To Captain STANHOPE.

YOUR affair is concluded, my dear Ned, your friends will ſoon have an opportunity of wiſhing you joy on your promotion.—Now, is your grateful heart ready to overflow; but e'er you can have an opportunity to vent your acknowledgments, that gratitude will be exchanged for contempt. —Yes, Stanhope, you will deſpiſe me, I deſpiſe myſelf—Would to heaven I could recall one fatal hour of madneſs.

—Would the devil had it; but that too ſucceſsful tempter procured it for me, and it muſt be placed to my account. How your charming ſiſters will rave! How they will deteſt me! Let my bloom wither, and my form decay, (will my little Fanny exclaim) rather than I ſhould have the ſlighteſt connection with that perfidious creature, man! She never, indeed, had any violent *panchant* for matrimony; nay, not that ſweet girl only, but her whole ſex will be up in arms againſt poor Somerville—that Somerville, late ſo much in favour with the dear creatures.—There is no help for it—I have gone too far to retract—you know not how I am entangled. O my gentle ſuffering Caroline, what will become of thee? My heart bleeds for her diſtreſs.

ſtreſs. If you, Ned, have any regard for virtue, endeavour to comfort the lovely mourner. Tell her—no, don't attempt to ſoften her reſentment, rather encourage her to forget her unworthy, her faithleſs huſband, who is now loſt to her for ever. She will, moſt likely, retire to Aſhby. As your ſiſters are in that neighbourhood, I hope they will uſe their endeavours to ſooth her grief, to diſpel her melancholy, by obliging her frequently with their agreeable company. I am ſure they will, they muſt, eſteem the amiable unfortunate. And do you, Stanhope, transfer to her that friendſhip, which I am going to forfeit. Farewel, believe me guilty as I may appear. I deſerve at leaſt as much compaſſion as cenſure. Vanity,

and a curſed love of intrigue, have drawn me from one ſtep to another, to the ruin of two of the loveliеſt women in the creation. In deſerting one, I violate the moſt ſacred vows; but can I abandon the other, after the ſacrifice ſhe has made me? Can I give up to infamy and ſhame the woman who adores me, and who is formed to be adored? — What a conflict between honour and love! But it is paſt, my fate is determined. Adieu,

SOMERVILLE.

LETTER

## LETTER XX.

### To SOPHY.

AT length, my deareſt Sophy, my fate is determined; but heaven, who ſees fit to afflict me, has likewiſe given me fortitude to ſupport that affliction;—for we ſhall not be tempted above what we are able to bear—Yet, ah, my friend, the firſt ſhock.—Nay, hardly, even now, can I compoſe myſelf enough to give you the particulars of my melancholy ſtory.——I muſt lay down my pen. This burſt of tears

will eaſe my labouring heart; for ſome time I was too unhappy to continue my journal.——Laſt night my Lord came home, it was about ten o'clock. I was ſitting at work; my poor little girl diverting me with her innocent prattle.——He was pale, and even trembled when he approached me. He took my hand, and gazed on me for ſome moments in ſilence, with a look ſo full of woe, of tender compaſſion.—O, Sophy, I ſhall never forget that expreſſive look!—Then, ſtill, without ſpeaking, he caſt himſelf into a chair. I followed him.—Are you not well, my deareſt Lord? You know not how you alarm me. —Why are you thus ſilent; why are you pale?—He kiſſed my hand. — No, I am not well, my gentle Caroline, I never ſhall be well again; curſed in-

infatuation, and yet I cannot break the enchantment.—My dear Lord, do not reproach yourſelf; we have all our failings, believe me, your Caroline, will ever be indulgent to your's; tell me the cauſe of your uneaſineſs; am I not your friend, your tender friend? It will relieve you; ſpeak my ever honoured huſband, continued I, throwing my arms round his neck. O, make me, at leaſt, your grateful confidant; your joys, your ſorrows are mine, though I loſe your heart, yet no one ſhall prevent my ſharing in them.—I pauſed and wiped my eyes.—What a monſter! am I, cried he. O Caroline, leave me, you ſoften me too much!—His voice ſpoke his emotions.—A monſter. My Somerville, you are all my fondeſt wiſhes could deſire; you may have

been hurried into ſome little indiſcretions by the warmth of your paſſions. But——little, interrupted he, no, no, Caroline, do not deceive yourſelf, you will e'er long confeſs I am a monſter, and curſe the hour you became the wife of ſuch a villain.——Curſe the hour I became your's, cried I with fervor, lifting up my eyes!—No, on my knees I will thus praiſe heaven, that ordained me to ſo great a bleſſing. O Somerville, my Lord, my huſband, do not reproach yourſelf, be your fault what it will, 'tis never too late.—It is, it is, interrupted he, riſing. I tell you there is no remedy.—While he ſpoke, a ſervant entered and delivered him a note—He looked at it; then for ſome moments at me.—I would pray for your happineſs Caroline, ſaid he, in a broken accent,

cent, but heaven hears no ſuch prayers as mine, I am hardened in guilt, farewel.—O my Lord, my Lord, where are you going? cried I, burſting into tears. —Do not aſk me, ſaid he, embracing me. I would ſpeak, Caroline, but I cannot.—Yet the curſed time is come. —He pauſed—and turning to his child. —No, there, added he, I dare not truſt myſelf, 'tis the laſt ſtruggle of expiring virtue.—He was hurrying out of the room.—I caught hold of him.—O Somerville, do not break my heart —He ruſhed from me, and I fell ſenſeleſs on the ground.—How long I continued thus inſenſible of my misfortunes, I know not; but when I recovered, I found myſelf on my bed; Sally weeping over me, and a ſurgeon preparing to bleed me. I opened my eyes,

eyes, and in a faint voice aſked, if my Lord was returned? Then coming more perfectly to myſelf, I recollected the late mournful ſcene, and uttering a deep ſigh, ſuffered myſelf to be bled, continuing ſilent during the operation. —My grief was too ſolemn for words to expreſs it.—When they bound up my arm, I again fainted.—But, alas, I was too ſoon reſtored to life and miſery —My poor ſympathizing Sally was drowned in tears.—O, that abominable curſed Miſs Walgrove, cried ſhe. Ah, Madam, did I not tell you, but you would not hear me. Long, long, have I been acquainted with their ſhameful intrigue.—Huſh, ſaid I, I muſt ſtill command you to be ſilent on that ſubject.——Come, my poor affectionate girl, put me to bed, that now diſconſolate

ſolate bed, from which I never more deſire to riſe.—She could not anſwer for her ſobs and tears; but my eyes were dry, that relief was denied me.—I lay, and mournfully recollected all the circumſtances of his ſolemn farewel.—What could he mean; where was he gone?—At laſt, Sally, ſaid I, in a melancholy accent; do you think, my Lord will not return to-night? Again ſhe burſt into tears. Ah, cried *ſhe*, nor I fear for many, many nights to come; that curſed Miſs Walgrove; her maid, her confidant, let me into all her ſecrets. I would have told your Ladyſhip long ago; but you would not liſten to me—they are gone off together.—Enough, my good girl, ſaid I, deeply ſighing, draw the curtains and leave me.—I turned from her.—She

con-

continued in the room in ſpite of my orders to the contrary.—What a night, my dear Sophy!—I ſhall not attempt to deſcribe what I ſuffered—Next morning, the firſt thing I did, was to ſend for my poor little Caroline; on the ſight of her, tears at length found vent. I placed her on my knee, and wept over her in ſilence.—About twelve o'clock, they told me Lady Brathwait and Miſs Anſtruther were come, and inſiſted on ſeeing me; without waiting for leave, they ruſhed into my apartment—One came to vindicate her conduct, both to condole with me.—I could have diſpenſed with that inſtance of their politeneſs.—Lady Brathwait preſſed me to go into the country with her—I know not what anſwer I made; but I know it was to decline the favour.—Their viſit was extremely unſeaſonable; I was

drowned

drowned in tears the whole time. The method they took to comfort me rather encreaſed my grief. They railed at Miſs Walgrove. I knew not what they ſaid, though they gave me an account of the manner in which ſhe went off. They are gone abroad, it ſeems.—O Sophy, he may return, but never will he return to his poor forſaken Caroline!—I can write no more. A crowd of melancholy ideas ruſh upon my mind; they are not to be expreſſed. My only relief is weeping. O, when will my tears be dried!

I am preparing for my departure: this gay, this odious town, is no place for me. I ſhall retire to one of—ah, Sophy, Lord Somerville's, but, alas, no longer my Lord's country-ſeats! I have

have wrote, to beg Mama will follow me there. — O that dear parent, how ſeverely will ſhe ſympathiſe in my afflictions. There is no bearing this houſe now—this melancholy, this deſerted houſe! Reſtleſs and unſettled, I wander from room to room—all is mournful and diſconſolate. In vain do I ſeek for that charming object, which uſed to enliven every place by his preſence. — I throw myſelf into the chair where he uſed to ſit, and burſt into tears. I viſit his picture a hundred times a day, and, placing myſelf overagainſt it, gaze and weep for hours together. It is thus my complaints find vent. I am weak enough to talk to it; I fix my eyes on it, till my diſordered imagination repreſents it as aſſuming an air of ſadneſs, while it ſeems

to

to liſten to my ſad tale of woe. The world is now to me a joyleſs deſert. I ſeem to be alone in it—nobody comes near me. —— Ah, no, the houſe of mourning is not much frequented!

LETTER

## LETTER XXI.

### To SOPHY.

I WAS terrified to death, my dear Sophy, on hearing that Sir Harry was preparing to follow his inconſtant, and firmly reſolved to take vengeance on his too ſucceſsful rival.—I knew not what to do to prevent his fatal purpoſe, trembling for the ſafety of my ſtill dear Somerville. I at laſt took the liberty to write to Villiers.—I begged he would favour me with his company; he immediately obeyed my ſummons.

mons.—I caſt myſelf at his feet, and bathing them in tears beſought his compaſſion; I would not riſe in ſpite of all his entreaties, till he had promiſed to give up his cruel purpoſe—I reaſoned with him; I endeavoured to convince him, how ridiculous it would be to endanger his life for a creature, who merited only his contempt; that he would ſhew more true ſpirit, by not condeſcending to take the leaſt notice of the affair, than by the dangerous method he in the firſt tranſports of his reſentment propoſed.—And who made her unworthy, cried he, with rage; who but that curſed ſeducer, that deſtroyer of innocence—that huſband? O, how unworthy the name, how unworthy this generous ſolicitude!——Worthy, or not, Sir, ſtill he is my huſband, nor

can

can his conduct, be it what it will, deſtroy my tender regard; you know not, Sir, the obligations I have to him, nor how good, how kind he was, till that foe to my happineſs ſeduced him from me.——I pauſed and wiped my eyes. Call him not the betrayer of innocence, reſumed I, did ſhe not know he was married? What could ſhe hope for? Why did ſhe for a moment liſten to his addreſſes? Believe me, Sir, he found her no difficult conqueſt.—It cannot be expected that you, Madam, ſhould ſpeak of her without prejudice; but I knew her well, and, fallen angel as ſhe is, cannot forget, ſhe was once the moſt virtuous, the moſt lovely of her ſex; and ſhall I not be revenged on the barbarous ſpoiler? No, Madam, think not I can put up with ſo

irre-

irreparable an injury.—Ah, Sir, ſaid I, weeping, I find I have an obdurate heart to deal with.—O, Sir, on my knees, thus humbly let me implore your generoſity; let me mediate between you; are we not equal ſufferers? Or rather, are not my injuries far greater than your's? You loſe only a faithleſs miſtreſs; while that miſtreſs robs me of a lover, friend and huſband all in one, and yet I can forgive the injury. O, let my example influence you. I raiſed my eyes to his face with a ſupplicating look. Lovely irreſiſtible pleader, cried he, but riſe, Madam, and let me kneel in my turn to implore your pardon, for having ſuffered you to condeſcend to that humble poſture.—No, never, ſir, never will I riſe, till you promiſe to give over all thoughts

of

of your revenge. I know my Somerville's ſpirit, I know the dangerous conſequence of your meeting. O, do not ſeek it! Why ſhould you purſue an unworthy, an inconſtant miſtreſs? Leave her to her fate.—Who can reſiſt your eloquence, cried he, I do promiſe, taking my hand to raiſe me, and for your ſake, forego my juſt reſentment; only let me hope your friendſhip in return, for this ſacrifice, which I think I could not have made to any creature breathing, but yourſelf, ſo firmly was I determined; but you have conquered—and I here again give you my honour, I will never do any thing in this curſed affair, that may augment the grief of a mourner ſo lovely.——Good heavens! added he, why was ſo much virtue and ſweetneſs thrown away on an ingrate.

Spare

Spare my Somerville, dear Sir; to heaven only is he accountable for his conduct: but, for your generous compliance with my requeſt, be aſſured of my eternal gratitude. — My utmoſt ambition, Madam, ſaid he, is to be ranked in the number of your friends. Is there any thing, in which I can be of ſervice to you?—You have already, Sir, done me ſervice, by contributing to my peace of mind.—I will not then, ſaid he, at this time, further intrude on you; but muſt flatter myſelf, that when your doors are open to your general acquaintance, you will not deny me the pleaſure of ſometimes paying my reſpects.—I curtſeyed.—He, with a reſpectful bow, took his leave. When he was gone, I fell on my knees, and returned moſt fervent thanks to hea-

ven, for having diſpoſed his heart to liſten to my ſuit.—And now, Sophy, I am more at eaſe, and, with a compoſed kind of melancholy reſignation, ſubmit to my fate. To-morrow morning I ſet off for Aſhby Park.—It is a diſmal time of the year for the country. So much the more ſuited to my preſent taſte. I ſhall ſuppoſe that nature ſympathiſes in my ſorrow, and that Aſhby, late ſo blooming, ſtripped of its verdure, mourns, like me, the loſs of our beloved maſter. Often ſhall I viſit that fine caſcade, which once I beheld with ſuch delight, while hanging on the arm of my then fond and tender Somerville; and while I ſit liſtening to its fall, the ſolemn concert aided by the whiſtling winds, I may addreſs myſelf with Mira to the winter—

To

To thee my gentle drooping head I bend,
Thy ſigh my ſiſter, and thy tear my friend:
On thee I muſe, and in thy haſtening ſun,
See life expiring e'er 'tis well begun.
Thy ſickening ray, and venerable gloom,
Shows life's laſt ſcene—the ſolitary tomb.

Ah, my dear, well is it for us, poor ſuffering mortals, that life is ſhort! Who would not wiſh it ſo, that knows, like we, how deluſive are all its empty tranſitory joys. Adieu, my love; the next letter you will receive from me, will be from my retreat.

## LETTER XXII.

From SOPHY.

EVERY thing is in readineſs for your good Mama's departure; but think not ſhe will come alone.—— No, Caroline, no my lovely ſuffering friend; your Sophy is likewiſe haſtening to mix her tears with thine. O, may the curſe of heaven light on the head of that abandoned Walgrove, that diſgrace to her ſex; but ſhe will be, ſhe will be puniſhed. Yes, I hope to ſee her e'er long as miſerable as ſhe deſerves, abandoned

doned by all the world, and left a prey to anguiſh and remorſe, while your virtue, thus purified in the furnace of affliction, receives its juſt reward.—The time I truſt is not far diſtant, when I ſhall ſee your penitent Lord, more than ever ſenſible of your worth, returning to you with redoubled tenderneſs, and humbly ſupplicating for pardon.—He muſt, he will e'er long be ſenſible of his errors, this tranſient guſt of lawleſs paſſion, will ſoon be extinguiſhed, and you'll reſume your empire o'er his heart. I am convinced he ſtill adores you.—Is it poſſible he ſhould not? Be patient then, my ſweet friend, you are called to ſevere trials, that your virtue may ſhine the more conſpicuous. I am haſtening to you, I ſhall collect all the little vivacity you have left me, in or-

der to amuſe my Caroline with pleaſing talk; we will beguile the tedious winter's night, and wiſh the time away till your wanderer returns; this little breach will, when you are once more united, but the more firmly cement that union.—Adieu, my love, I am ſo eager for my departure, that I cannot even allow myſelf time to write, ſo buſy am I in giving orders.—Farewell, in a few days I ſhall have the pleaſure of embracing my ſweet friend.

LETTER

## LETTER XXIII.

### To Mrs. WESTBROOK.

LAST night, about nine o'clock, we arrived ſafe at Aſhby, not without ſome perils and dangers; for I was ſo impatient to get to the end of my journey, that I obliged our driver to take longer ſtages than is common at this ſeaſon.—The roads are not good, I was ſorry on Mrs. Southern's account, that I had yielded to my natural impatience, yet ſhe was no leſs

eager than myſelf to embrace her ſweet daughter; though ſhe would not, I believe, have reached her houſe ſo ſoon, had I not hurried on in ſpite of ſome apprehenſion, which ſhe now and then diſcovered, at the ſwiftneſs of our motion; the dear creature did not expect us till next morning; but it was an agreeable ſurpriſe, though it cauſed in her ſome emotion on entering the houſe; a ſervant ran to inform her of our arrival. She hurried into the hall; ſhe ſpoke not one word, but caſt herſelf into the arms of her mother, who held her for ſome moments preſſed to her boſom. At laſt, ſhe diſengaged herſelf, and turning to me. My Sophy, cried ſhe, ah, how different is this meeting from our laſt.—She flung her arms round my neck, and burſt into tears. I repeatedly

peatedly embraced her.—At laſt, a little recovered from our emotions, ſhe took us each by the hand, and led us into the parlour, where caſting at me a mournful look, and pointing to a picture of her Lord, there, ſaid ſhe, in a moving accent, is all I have left of him, who, in your laſt viſit to me, gave you a welcome ſo engaging;——but thank heaven, added ſhe, with a faint ſmile, my cruel enemy has not ſpoiled me of all my joys; my friends are ſtill left, of thoſe ſhe could not deprive me, though ſhe robbed me of a huſband, virtue and they will yet yield ſome conſolation in the midſt of my ſufferings.—Pardon me, my dear mother, turning to her, and taking her hand. I ſee I affect you, I ought not to mix this ſadneſs with your reception; but

it will ſoon wear off, your dear preſence, and that of my Sophy, cannot fail to reſtore me to peace; we will not look back, but you ſhall help to ſooth me, with more cheerful proſpects of what is to come. She took her ſeat between us, and wiping her eyes, aſſumed an air of ſweet compoſure.—I could not ſpeak, my heart was too full, yet I endeavoured to conceal my emotions. I held her hand preſſed between mine, gazing on her with tender compaſſion in my looks.—Ah, how much is the dear creature altered!—She ſaw me examine her. My dear Sophy, ſaid ſhe, affecting a ſmile, will not think the town air has been of much benefit to my complexion; but that of the country, and your company, my beloved friend, will, I truſt, ſoon reſtore my

my faded bloom.—I could no longer contain myſelf; but burſting into tears, haſtily aroſe, and flung myſelf into a chair at the fartheſt corner of the room, and for a few moments gave way to my ſtruggling grief.—She looked after me with an air of grateful tenderneſs; but did not attempt to conſole me. She knew it was beſt to let me give vent to the firſt violence of my ſorrow, and I ſhould after that be more compoſed.—She ordered ſupper, and with obliging aſſiduity, went herſelf to hurry the ſervants, kindly ſaying, we muſt no doubt ſtand in need of refreſhment, after the fatigue of our journey.——When ſhe left the room, Mrs. Southern came up to me. O, Miſs Weſtbrook, cried ſhe, ſurely heaven will hear my prayers, and reward my dear virtuous

child, for this her patient reſignation to her fate; but dry your tears, we ought not to affect her with our ſorrow; did we not come to comfort her? Pray endeavour to be more chearful; you cannot ſuppoſe I feel leſs, and yet you ſee I have a greater command of myſelf.——Caroline entered while ſhe ſpoke.—She had aſſumed a gay air, in hopes of raiſing our dejected ſpirits by her example.——Admirable creature! How ſtudious is ſhe of the happineſs of all around her, though, alas, ſhe herſelf enjoys ſo little.——Come, my Sophy, ſaid ſhe, I ſhall chide you, for this dejection.—I thought you had been a better traveller, than to be thus fatigued with your journey.—I expected, by this time, you would have made ſome of your flying viſits to almoſt every

every room in the houſe; they are worth your ſeeing, I can tell you; the gardens too: but to-morrow morning I will ſhew you all the beauties of my Eden; you know I am a great walker, and though this is not the moſt favourable ſeaſon for that exerciſe, yet no ſeaſon can wholly rob the country of its charms. Even in the depth of winter, I a thouſand times prefer it to the dirty noiſy town.—Supper was ſerved, nothing could be more elegant than our little repaſt. My dear friend continued to chat with agreeable vivacity, and not only obligingly preſſed us to eat, but endeavoured to excite us to it by her example.—Yet, in ſpite of all her pains, 'twas long e'er I could ſhake off my melancholy and dejection. At length, however, as ſhe perſiſted in her, alas,

alas, affected gaiety, I forced myſelf to talk a little in my turn; but carefully avoided any ſubject that might renew the remembrance of her misfortunes.—She would not ſuffer us to ſit late.—A little paſt eleven, ſhe conducted us to our apartments; when, embracing and wiſhing me a good night, ſhe retired with her Mama.——This morning I aroſe in rather better ſpirits, and joined my friend and Mrs. Southern in the breakfaſt parlour.—Our ſweet little Caroline too, whom I had not ſeen the night before, was there alſo, pratling away to her delighted mother. —Come, Sophy, cried ſhe, when I entered, reſume your province. I reſign my charge, once more take your pupil under your own tuition. I know not how I have acquited myſelf, but I fear

fear I ſhall e'er long be chidden by you for too much indulgence.—Caroline, my dear, turning to her ſmiling girl, how do you welcome your ſweet governeſs?—The little creature flung her arms round my neck. Does Mama love you, Madam, ſaid ſhe, if ſhe does, I will love you too, for Mama will love nobody but what is good.—I ſnatched her to my breaſt, kiſſed her a thouſand times, and placing her on my knee, you muſt love me, cried I, for dearly do I love my little Caroline.—After breakfaſt, which paſſed in the moſt agreeable manner, Mrs. Southern, who perfectly doats on the little cherub, taking her by the hand, went with her to the nurſery, while my friend and I ſtrolled into the park. —Aſhby muſt in ſummer be quite enchant-

chanting, for even now it has a thouſand beauties.—You cannot imagine a more delightful ſituation, more varied or more extenſive proſpects; the houſe too is a noble building, and elegantly furniſhed.—We did not return from our agreeable ramble, till juſt as the dinner was ſerved. The reſt of the day being rainy, we ſpent in the library.—At night, our little ſociety ſat round the fire, agreeably converſing, not very gaily indeed, but we were at leaſt far from melancholy.—And I truſt, e'er long, I ſhall recover ſome of my natural vivacity.—My dear Mama, you have highly obliged me, by permitting me to make this viſit; for could I ever have pardoned myſelf, had I deſerted my friend, had I not come to condole with her in her affliction.—

Tell

—Tell my dear Kitty, I charge her to omit no endeavours to amuſe you in my abſence. Adieu.—Another word, and then another—I always find ſomething more to add; but 'tis late. Again—then, my dear Mama adieu, believe me, your moſt affectionate

SOPHY.

LETTER

## LETTER XXIV.

### To Miſs KITTY WESTBROOK.

I Write to you now, Kitty, becauſe I ſhall perhaps be tempted to trifle a little, and Mama may not perhaps be in a humour to make allowance for that conſtitutional foible of her ſometimes prating girl. Who do you think has been to pay his devoirs this morning? No leſs than the handſome Captain Stanhope! His lively preſence has, in ſome meaſure, recovered me from the plaintive ſtile into which

which we had fallen. There is no deſcribing his reſpectful, his amiable behaviour to Lady Somerville. Upon my word he is a charming fellow; but not, I fear, ſo eaſily charmed as ſome folks could wiſh: for, though I burſt in upon him in all my glory, in a moſt elegant diſhabille, which ſome people would perſuade me I become better than a full dreſs; yet the ſtoical wretch was as compoſed, as if he had been paying his reſpects to his great grandmother! — How mortifying! — But the creature muſt have a heart of oak, if he eſcapes a wound this evening, when I propoſe playing off upon him the whole artillery of my charms. He has prevailed on Lady Somerville to ſpend the ſaid evening with his

ſiſters.

ſiſters. They are lovely women, as my friend tells me; for I have not yet ſeen them. They had paid their reſpects to her before my arrival. This is his birth-day, it ſeems, and the day on which a man is ſuppoſed, if ever, to have arrived to the age of diſcretion — the happy day, which the minor pants for: but our poor Captain is too literally ſo, to hail it with any extraordinary raptures. Adieu, for the preſent. — I muſt dreſs for this viſit. If it affords any amuſement, you, Kitty, ſhall have your ſhare in

## CONTINUATION.

LOST, ruined, and undone! — My nimble Captain has ſlipped through my fingers, in ſpite of all my pains! — Well, if

if ever I again ſcheme for conqueſts, may none but Audley's ſubmit to my chains.—What a buſtle have we had. —Come, bruſh up your attention, child, I know you love a buſtle at your heart. —I, armed at all points, ſet off about five, with my Caroline, to our beau's; the ſweeteſt little dwelling you can conceive. We were politely received by him at the door, and uſhered into a ſmall but elegant parlour, which is adorned with inimitable drawings, performed by the hands of his fair ſiſters. Theſe ſiſters, eſpecially the youngeſt, beggars all deſcription.——Never was there a more lovely creature, and then the innocence of her looks, and the plain, the elegant ſimplicity of her dreſs, renders her quite adorable. She exactly anſwers the idea I have formed

of

of the Marchioneſs of L. V. Jennetta, the *Fortunate Country Maid.*—Her brother—Never was there ſo fond a brother, he perfectly doats on his little Fanny.—Surely, thought I, when I ſaw his fine languiſhing eyes, ſo often directing their tender glances to her, thoſe intelligent windows of the ſoul, do not ſeem to beſpeak that frozen inſenſible heart of which he is accuſed; one might, I think, make ſomething of that heart, if one did but know how to come at it.—There was, beſides his ſiſter, one Mr. Anſley, a good comfortable looking old Grecian, blunt in his manner, but neither rude nor ill-natured; he is, it ſeems, a kind of guardian to thoſe handſome orphans—He and my Ladyſhip were ſoon on a very ſociable footing. As I ſaw but little probability of

of making any thing of my captain, I thought, rather than be idle, I might as well dart a few of my cheering glances at old ſquare-toes, to warm the cold boſom of age.—He received them very cordially, and ſwore, in his free manner, that I was a deviliſh ſmart girl, and if I would but ſing him a ſong, I ſhould have his heart for my pains. Come, come, cried I, one muſt not be too nice now-a-days, and ſince the purchaſe is ſo very eaſy, have at you.—So ſaying, I ran to a ſpinnet, and with great gaiety ſung.——

"Though my locks are growing grey,
"Fly me not fair maid, I pray, &c."

Admirable, i'faith, cried he, joining his hoarſe voice in the chorus, Fly me not fair maid, I pray.——When I aroſe, Stanhope, looking fondly on his Fanny, Muſic is too agreeable, not to wiſh the en-

entertainment prolonged! Will you my love, taking her hand, endeavour in your turn to amuſe our amiable gueſts. —She ſmiled ſweetly on him. I cannot refuſe, my dear brother; but are you not going to expoſe your Fanny; conſider the diſadvantage of my weak attempt, after one who has convinced us ſhe is perfect miſtreſs of muſick.—— None of your fine ſpeeches, cried honeſt Anſley, we'll take the will for the deed, you may be as diffident as you pleaſe, but I know your little nimble fingers have often made me ready to cut capers, in ſpite of corns and gout. ——Her brother led her to the inſtrument; the ſweet creature's complexion heightened by a glow of humble modeſty. He leaned over the back of her chair, turned over the leaves, and

when

when ſhe left off, kiſſed her cheek, as the reward of her performance.—— Upon my word, envy apart, ſhe plays inimitably; but this brother, thought I, is ſo unconſcionably fond, that I wonder ſhe is not quite ſpoiled. After regaling ourſelves with tea and coffee, and chatting over it;—all but my poor Caroline, with great gaiety.—Now for buſineſs, cried my old beau; will you excuſe me, ladies? But you, Madam, turning to Lady Somerville, I wiſhed to be preſent, while I make a diſcovery of no ſmall importance to one, whom you honour with ſome ſhare of your eſteem.—This is your birth-day, Edward, addreſſing himſelf to the Captain, who appeared a good deal ſurpriſed, and at a loſs to gueſs what he was driving at. And it is likewiſe a day, continued he, ſmiling, on which

I am at liberty to reveal your real birth and parentage.—My real birth and parentage, what the devil do you mean? —Compoſe yourſelf young man, and liſten to me with patience.—Fanny's eyes were fixed on her beloved brother, and every different emotion that appeared on his countenance, diſcovered themſelves in her's. So truly did their hearts ſympathize with each other. ——I have brought, ſaid Mr. Anſley, taking out of his pocket a ſmall box, this little caſket, which your ſuppoſed father delivered to me on his death-bed.—My ſuppoſed father! exclaimed the Captain. O Fanny.—But pray proceed, Sir, I am on the rack of impatience. —Oh! thought I, 'tis eaſy to ſee how the wind ſits in that quarter. —He was only a ſuppoſed father, re-

ſumed

ſumed Mr. Anſley, but during your real one's life-time, who committed you to his care, he was ſworn to ſecreſy; and after his death, he ſtill thought it moſt prudent to let you remain in ignorance, as to your birth, till your coming of age put you in poſſeſſion of that fortune, which till this day you had no right to avail yourſelf of; he feared you might have indulged too aſpiring hopes, that to know, while young and thoughtleſs, you would one day be maſter of ten thouſand pounds, might tempt you to extravagance; beſides, he wiſhed as long as poſſible to make you believe he was your father, as the moſt likely way to ſecure your affection and obedience. But don't be too much ſurpriſed, nor don't let it wound your pride, for children

are not anſwerable for the faults of their parents. You are in reality natural ſon to the late Lord Somerville. My God, exclaimed he!—my God, exclaimed my Caroline! Almoſt in a breath. Is it poſſible?—Abſolutely fact, reſumed the old man, and of its truth, I can give you both the ſtrongeſt proofs.—O, Fanny, my lovely charming Fanny, cried Stanhope, half wild with joy, and almoſt devouring her hand with rapturous kiſſes; if I am not your brother—if I may at laſt indulge that tenderneſs, for which I have ſo often ſecretly reproached myſelf, how happy ſhall I be.—The dear girl bluſhed, caſt down her eyes, and gently puſhing him from her.—Stay, my dear Edward, you interrupt Mr. Anſley, I dare not yet give credit.—She ſtopped,

and

and with modeſt confuſion hid her glowing face on the boſom of her ſiſter. Edward fixed on her his fond, his doating eyes, and begged Mr. Anſley would proceed in his intereſting narrative. That gentleman went on as follows :—Your mother, my dear Stanhope, be her indiſcretion forgot, was a woman of family, my Lord was ſo ſenſible of her merit, that though ſhe had given a fatal proof of her weakneſs, yet Mr. Stanhope, who was their only confidant, has often told me, that he really believes, had not death untimely ſnatched her from his arms, he would have married her, though a man remarkable for his pride and ambition. ——Here my Caroline looked at me, and uttered a deep ſigh.—You, Edward, was almoſt from your infancy

committed to the care of Mr. Stanhope. His Lady behaved to you with as much tenderneſs as to her own ſweet girls; but your real father, who ſoon after the death of your mother, married Lady Elizabeth W——, was at the charge of your education.—You was ſent to Eaton at the ſame time, with the preſent Lord Somerville, and there contracted a friendſhip with that young nobleman, little ſuſpecting that he was your brother. Soon after you left Eaton, your father procured you a commiſſion; you was ſent abroad. Mr. Stanhope, and his Lady, within a few weeks of each other, died during your abſence. The two amiable orphans melted into tears at the mention of their parents. Edward, with the utmoſt tenderneſs, kiſſed off the pearly

drops

drops from the half averted cheek of his Fanny, at the ſame time preſſing her hand to his ſympathizing heart.—We will now, continued Mr. Anſley, examine this depoſit, if you pleaſe; it contains, I believe, only ſome of Lord Somerville's letters, together with the deed, which impowers you to receive ten thouſand pounds the day you are of age; the money was depoſited in my hands, and you ſhall, my dear boy, receive it on demand, with perhaps more intereſt than you expect; my pretty wards too, ſhall find in me a father, and perhaps, if you pleaſe me, I may uſe my endeavour to make you my ſon-in-law. Don't bluſh, my little Frances, for that ſuch a union might take place, was the wiſh both of Lord Somerville and your parents; and, ah,

how ardently is it mine, cried he, enraptured. Edward, folding her in his arms, from which ſhe modeſtly ſtruggled to diſengage herſelf.—Unkind, cried he, mournfully; am I then leſs dear to you as a lover, than I was when only a brother.—Ah, returned ſhe, reclining her face on his ſhoulder. Aſſume what character you will, my Edward can never ceaſe to be dear to me. He thanked her only by a tender embrace.—Mr. Anſley then read to us ſome of Lord Somervilie's letters, and that in which Mr. Stanhope fully reveals every circumſtance of the affair, ſo clearly, that none of us could any longer entertain the leaſt ſhadow of doubt. Indeed, my Caroline perfectly recollected his hand-writing.—There was one addreſſed to her Lord,

wherein

wherein his brother is recommended to his friendſhip. At the ſight of this, my friend melted into tears. If ever he returns, ſaid ſhe, ſighing, I am convinced he will more than fulfill this requeſt; in the mean time, my dear brother, added ſhe, preſenting him her hand, which he preſſed reſpectfully to his lips, be aſſured of mine, and believe that I am truly rejoiced on the diſcovery of ſo agreeable a relation.—He anſwered this obliging compliment as it deſerved. Come, come, cried my lover—the Duce is in it, if I may not aſpire to this old ſoul, tho', upon my word, I begin to be afraid, that I ſhall not be ſuffered to enjoy even this antiquated conqueſt in peace; for I half ſuſpect, little Emila, unwilling that a younger ſiſter ſhould get the

ſtart of her, is ſetting her cap at him, and to ſay truth, young as the beſt of his ſex in inconſtancy, he is rather ſweet upon her.——This night, continued he, I dedicate to feſtivity and joy; I have invited a few of our country neighbours, and muſt inſiſt on this good company's adding to the number of my gueſts.—You ſhall have batchelors fare, added he, ſmiling, and taking my hand, you know what that is, I ſuppoſe? And be aſſured, the kiſſes will not be forgot.——My coach waits, give me leave, Madam, turning to Lady Somerville, time was when I could have acquitted myſelf with a better grace;

"But tho' my locks are growing grey,
"Fly me not fair nymphs, I pray."

Honeſt,

Honeſt, cheerful old ſoul, I like him exceedingly.—We drove to his houſe, at no great diſtance; Edward and his Fanny in raptures all the way; they now make themſelves amends for their long pent up paſſion; had it not been ſo long reſtrained, it would not perhaps have blazed with ſo much brightneſs.—Never was there ſuch an elegant little baby-houſe as Mr. Anſley's, every thing ſo jemmy, ſo many pretty nick-nacks, and in ſuch nice order; his grey-headed ſervants move like clock work, ſo regular, ſo orderly. O, defend me from ſuch a ſcene of ſtill-life!—Roaſting themſelves by the fire on velvet cuſhions, lay half a dozen Italian grey hounds, in one continual ſlumber; their maſter, I ſuppoſe, after ſmoaking his pipe, generally makes

one of the party, and like them, doſes an idle life away; but for once the ſcene was changed. Beſides the company already named, there were—— which ſhall have the precedency, male or female.—O, female to be ſure, that is a point we never give up, and yet for once, ſo powerful was country good breeding, that I actually thought we ſhould never have got our Lady gueſts farther than the door, there they ſtuck by the half dozen, the edge of their hoops juſt peeping in upon us.—I, for my part, after liſtening about half an hour to—by no means, Ma'am, can't, upon my word, pray, Ma'am, 'pon my honor, you muſt go firſt, and ſo forth, gave it up, and very quietly reſumed my ſeat.—At laſt, Mr. Anſley ended the polite debate, by ſeizing the hand of

one

one of the ceremonious fair ones, and pulling her in, without more ado, then buſtled the reſt.—The firſt that entered, was Mrs. Wanley, her huſband a country 'Squire and country juſtice, a Lady of no ſmall importance, I aſſure you. She gave us a haſty bob of a curteſy, and plumped into a chair. Next came Mrs. Trantum, a dainty widow, followed by her two fair daughters; the one, as I could ſee at the firſt glance, a compleat romp, the other, tall, ſtiff, and upright as a may-pole. Bobs a-piece from them, and down they ſat.—Mrs. Midway, led up the rear, a little plump, round, buſtling gentlewoman, who ſeemed half out of breath with her journey; and though one cannot complain of the heat, yet ſhe had no ſooner dropped her untaught

taught curteſy, then ſhe flung herſelf into a chair, and began to fan herſelf moſt violently.—After the ladies, without much ceremony, bounced in about the ſame number of rural beaux. The men were hardly ſeated, when they fell to fox-hunting and politicks tooth and nail.—The ladies to ſmall talk.—'Tis a perfect wonderment to me, ſaid Mrs. Wanley, addreſſing herſelf to my friend, to ſee how deadly bad the roads are, thof we have had but little rain, neither; I am ſure I ſhould have waited on your Ladyſhip long ago; but really one's horſes had need be as ſtrong as Goliah's, to tug one through the mire.—And why don't you talk to your huſband about it, cried Mrs. Midway, I am ſure, if mine was a juſtice of peace, I'd teaze his heart out, e'er I'd ſuffer ſuch

ſuch a nuiſance.—Here we have not had a card-meeting the lord knows when; time was, when we uſed to be a little neighbourly, as one may ſay, and oftens had a ſnug comfortable game of whiſk.—And what is worſe than that, ſcreamed out Miſs Trantum, ſiſter and I could not get to the laſt races for the naſty roads, I wiſh they were hanged.—Well, I do love a horſe-race of all things, don't you, ſiſter? And you love dancing too, I ſuppoſe, ſaid I? O mightily, and then one ſees ſo many fine folks! Don't we, ſiſter?—— This ſiſter, ſo kindly referred to, uttered nothing but the monoſyllable yes, during the whole evening, a favourite word of her's, and a favourable ſymptom for her lover, if ſhe has any. —That, I think, will admit of a doubt.

—Well,

—Well, I never ſuffer my daughters to go to horſe-races, reſumed Mrs. Midway—their heads are giddy for a month after. I thought I ſhould have been ſmothered laſt time I was at one; and the roſey-faced gentlewoman fanned herſelf at the bare idea. I was almoſt melted in getting into the aſſembly-room, though I joſtled and puſhed with elbows and arms, and made what room I could. O, I remember it, cried Mrs. Trantum, laughing; nay, I ſhall never forget two gentlemen, who ſtood near you, how they were diverted.—This little rolling-pin, ſaid they, though ſhe is herſelf almoſt moiſtened to paſte, carries all before her. — You may laugh, reſumed the other, but it was no joke to me. I am ſure I got a pair of fine Bruſſels laced

laced lappets torn almoſt to tatters in the fray.—But what is a horſe-race to our laſt election ball! interrupted Mrs. Wanley.—There was ſtirrings for ye.—I had to begin it, as to be ſure is my place—but ſuch a trim as I was in, before I could ſqueeze through the mob!—My cap half off, my ruffles the wrong ſide foremoſt, and hardly a pin left in my clothes. Well, but I do think, cried Mrs. Midway, (and her mouth ſeemed to water as ſhe ſpoke) there never was ſuch a feaſt as 'Squire H. gave at that election. I uſed to be a tolerable hand at cuſtards, but his beat mine all to ſticks—ſo firm, ſo ſmooth, ſo nicely ſeaſoned; and then his veniſon!—I never ſhall taſte ſuch another haunch. By this time Miſs Trantum had drawn her chair nearer

mine,

mine, and wiſhed to ſet in for a *tete à-tete.* — And how do you like this part of the country, Miſs? ſaid ſhe. I aſſure you in ſummer it is mighty pleaſant; ſiſter and I walk, aye, for miles and miles. She ſhould have added, don't we, ſiſter? — I am not fond of walking, returned I. —O la! well, that's much! But you ride, mahap? — No. — What, do you do neither one nor t'other? What then do you do?—O, a thouſand things!— What ſay you to reading, for one?— O la, ſiſter and I read a power of books! There's a mighty pretty one, I forget its name, about love, running away, and I don't know what all; a mighty pretty book, indeed; I read in it from morning till night; but Mama knows nothing of the matter; for by her

her good will, you muſt know, one ſhould read nothing but the Bible and Complete Houſewife. I am ſure t'others ten times as merry; i'n't it, ſiſter?— Quite tired, Kitty, impoſſible to proceed with ſuch ridiculous ſtuff, I at laſt got into a corner with the agreeable Emila. Edward and Fanny were, to make uſe of an Iriſhiſm, alone in a crowd — they neither ſaw, heard nor attended, to any thing but each other. Lady Somerville, with the moſt winning condeſcenſion, liſtened with ſmiles of complacency to the tireſome tattlers which ſurrounded her, and charmed the ſimple, but well-meaning dames, by the notice ſhe took of them. At laſt we ſat down to cards, all but the lovers, who fortunately cut out, and by that means enjoyed a delightful

*tete-à-tete*

to every thing. Ah, would to heaven I were equal to the taſk of conſoling my ſweet friend! I endeavour to amuſe myſelf by every trifle that offers, that my ſpirits, which have long been on the wing, may not totally take their flight, when I want them ſo much to ſupport thoſe of my Caroline.—But it won't do—her grief lies too near the heart. Sweet mourner! When, O merciful heaven, wilt thou ſend her comfort! Heigh ho! — ſo much, ſo juſtly am I out of conceit with matrimony, that, happy as Fanny's promiſes to be, the merely being preſent at it has made me ſad. Poor Lady Somerville!—I thought ſhe would have fainted during the ceremony.—All her miſfortunes ruſhed upon her mind, and quite overpowered her gentle ſpirits.

I ſhall

I ſhall for ever eſteem the generous Stanhope, for his behaviour to her. When we got to his houſe, ſhe was obliged to withdraw, that ſhe might endeavour to regain a little compoſure, ——I followed her. She caſt herſelf on a bed, and gave free vent to her tears. I was ſaying every thing I could think of moſt likely to alleviate her ſorrows, when I heard ſomebody gently tap at the door. It was Edward.—May I ſpeak to Lady Somerville, ſaid he. I ought not to have ſolicited her preſence, on this occaſion, though it did me the higheſt honour, —He approached the bed, knelt by the ſide of it, took her hand and preſſed it to his lips, while the tear gliſtened in his eyes.——Dear Madam, I ſhall never forgive myſelf, for being

in

in ſome meaſure the unhappy cauſe of this affliction.——How can I atone for it. You may command even my life; tell me but how I can ſerve you. I will go abroad. My Lord is generous; greatly as he has erred, I am convinced, you are ſtill miſtreſs of his heart; the letter he wrote to me before his departure, is a convincing proof of it. Perhaps his friendſhip for me, and my preſence may have ſome influence. Tenderly as I love my Fanny, in ſuch a cauſe I can leave the dear girl almoſt without regret; ſhe too will, I am ſure, approve of my going.—O, name it not, my kind Edward, cried Lady Somerville, do not think I will ever agree to ſo wild a ſcheme. What would your preſence do? No, no, my generous brother, he is loſt, forever loſt

to

to his Caroline!—Do not yield to this deſpair, interrupted he, with emotion, but conſider calmly of my propoſal; believe the ſincerity of my friendſhip. —Theſe are not mere empty profeſſions.—I know they are not, ſaid ſhe, and believe me in my turn, when I aſſure you, that your friendſhip is a great conſolation to me.—Ah! I have not many friends, yet let me not be ungrateful, added ſhe, preſſing my hand, two ſuch as theſe, who take ſuch unwearied pains to comfort me, few have to boaſt of; but leave me, my obliging Stanhope, ſorry am I to throw, by my involuntary ſadneſs, a cloud over this happy day. May it be only the commencement of your felicity. You reſemble your charming brother in perſon, and in many of his amiable quali-

ties, but beware how you imitate his faults; go to your lovely bride, and may no cruel enemy ever ſeparate the hearts and hands that heaven has thus firmly united.——She turned from him, and wiped her eyes.—He left the room, rather to conceal his emotion, than in obedience to her commands.—My ſweet friend, ſoon aſſumed an air of outward ſerenity, and we joined the company.—Interrupted.—No time to tell you of Mr. Anſley's generoſity——Good old man. Ah! now I am poſitively gone over head and ears.—Adieu, your's in haſte.

SOPHY.

LETTER

## LETTER XXIV.

### To Mrs. WESTBROOK.

OH! my dear Mama, there is no end to my Caroline's ſufferings. —What a wretch, what a cruel wretch is that Somerville!—But no wonder he ſhould be loſt to all ſenſe of honour and humanity, while under the curſed influence of that female fiend.—O, my Caroline, my gentle ſuffering friend, my heart bleeds for thee.—I know not how to begin the melancholy relation. Is all our flattering hopes come to this?

—While we were at breakfaſt, converſing with more than uſual chearfulneſs, I have not for a long time ſeen my friend in ſuch agreeable ſpirits.—A ſervant entered, and delivered her a letter.——She looked at the direction, and changed colour.—Good heavens! cried ſhe, what can this mean, 'tis my Lord's hand. Ah, how often have I received his welcome packets.—With emotion, quick, quick, my dear Caroline, exclaimed I, break the ſeal, I am dying with impatience.—I thought our chearfulneſs foreboded good news. Read, read, child, and bleſs your friends with it.—She opened the fatal letter.—She read, ſhe turned pale as death, and fell back ſenſeleſs in her chair.—I flew to her aſſiſtance. When ſhe began to recover, Mrs. Southern took it out of her

her hand.—Caroline opened her eyes; ſhe ſat ſome time motionleſs, thoſe fine eyes raiſed to heaven; her hands claſped, and her countenance expreſſive of the moſt unutterable woe.—At laſt, riſing with an air of melancholy compoſure—do not read it, my dear mother, cried ſhe, throwing her arms around her neck, it will too much ſhock you; I am young, and inured to misfortunes —Let me reveal the mournful news — Your child will ſoften the account, and tenderly mix with it her ſoothing careſſes.—'Tis I alone, added ſhe, wiping her eyes, that am born to drink the bitter cup of affliction without mixture; then turning to me, who ſtood loſt in aſtoniſhment and grief, wondering what this new calamity could be. —Did not my Sophy ever love her

Caroline? Did not our friendſhip commence long e'er I knew the curſe of greatneſs? And will ſhe not, continued ſhe, claſping me in her arms, ſtill love me, though again reduced to my humble ſtation? Ah, I have now indeed, burſting into tears, in every ſenſe loſt my huſband.—She took the letter, read that, my dear, and judge what I at this moment ſuffer. I know not how I got to my apartment, but I found myſelf there, the fatal letter in my hand. I tranſcribe it for you, you may by it more eaſily imagine, than I can deſcribe, what we feel on the occaſion.

## The LETTER.

"THE amiable Caroline may remember, it was her own requeſt, that I ſhould

ſhall do myſelf the honour to wait on you immediately.——I will ſet off for Aſhby the moment I have diſpatched this. I have a ſeat not far diſtant from Lord Somerville's, he will accompany me there, where I ſhall leave him, till you have favoured me with your advice, in what manner we are to proceed in an affair ſo delicate, and on the ſucceſs of which ſo much depends. — I am, Madam, with the moſt reſpectful tenderneſs,

Your obedient,

VILLIERS.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXIV.

### To Mrs. WESTBROOK.

O My dear Mama—but I will not anticipate. I was extremely impatient for the arrival of Sir Harry. My friend knew nothing of his coming. I expected him yesterday morning—he did not come—I was a little uneasy at this delay. About six in the evening, Lady Somerville proposed a walk. I took care not to go far from the house. We strolled up and down the avenue facing it. The evening

ing was remarkably fine — nurſe and the child were of our party. While we ſauntered in this manner, Sir Harry made his appearance on horſeback, attended by one ſervant only, who, diſmounting and opening the gate, took his horſe and followed him to where we waited for his coming. You may believe, he met with a welcome reception, both from my friend and my Ladyſhip. He took my hand—ſhe was almoſt tempted to ſeize one of his.—O Sir Harry, cried ſhe out of breath with eagerneſs, how is my Somerville? Does he relent? Will he condeſcend to be reconciled to his Caroline? Will he at length reward me with his returning love, for ſufferings, which, when ſet in competition with that, I ſhall conſider as trifling, nay, which

from

from that moment will no longer have a place in my memory? Ah, tell me, what am I to hope for? I know not what anſwer he made; for, hearing ſomebody utter a deep ſigh, I turned haſtily round; I ſaw his ſervant leaning againſt one of the trees almoſt ſwooning. Look, look, Sir Harry, your man! I could ſay no more; he ran to aſſiſt him. Lady Somerville, whoſe gentle ſpirits are eaſily affected, ſunk down on a ſeat oppoſite to where he was. At her requeſt, I likewiſe hurried to the ſick man with my ſalts; but they were no longer neceſſary: he ſtood reclining on the ſhoulder of Sir Harry. His eyes, or rather his eye, for one had a black patch over it, fixed on my friend. I was no leſs ſurpriſed at his eaſy familiarity with his maſter,

than

than to ſee him ſo ardently gazing on my Caroline; but judge how my amazement was encreaſed, when I heard him exclaim, O the angelic creature! Who can reſiſt the power of ſuch charms? Yet dare I, can I, Villiers? —Yes, I muſt, I will yield to the tender dictates of my heart! So ſaying, he ſprung forward, and, caſting himſelf at the feet of my friend, threw his arms round her. The man's mad, cried I, and was hurrying after him, when Sir Harry ſeized my hand, do you not know him? ſaid he, ſmiling. Is he ſo effectually diſguiſed? Surely this laſt action can leave you no longer in doubt who he is! My God, exclaimed I, it is Somerville! O thou fly wretch! But, what will become of my Caroline!—This ſurpriſe will be

too

too much for her! While I ſpoke, her Lord threw off his diſguiſe. O my Caroline, cried he, will you not know me? Can you pardon your penitent Somerville? My Somerville! raiſing her voice in a tranſport of joy—yes, it is, it is my huſband. She flung her arms round his neck as he ſtill knelt before her. I feared the poor babe would be ſtifled between them; I therefore ran and ſeaſonably ſnatched it away. He held her for ſome moments preſſed to his breaſt, murmuring out the fondeſt, tendereſt things, that an enamoured heart could dictate; but ſhe heard him not. Overcome with joy, ſhe had fainted in his arms. Not long, however, was it e'er his gentle aſſiduity, and ſoft careſſes, brought her to herſelf. She aroſe, ſhe preſſed

his hand to her boſom, and gazed on him with inexpreſſible fondneſs; but ſhe could not ſpeak. What gratitude, what rapture appeared in his countenance! At laſt, turning to me, ſhe took her boy, and preſenting him to her Lord, let this ſweet pledge of our mutual love, ſaid ſhe, melting into tears of gentle ſenſibility, be likewiſe the pledge of our re-union. O my Somerville, let him welcome you: I cannot as I ought; yet, could you ſee my heart! — I do, I do! interrupted he with tranſport, and again claſping her in his arms, for its every emotion is painted on that amiable countenance. You do then, my Caroline,—I ſee, I know, I feel I am forgiven. — Forgiven! cried ſhe with fervor, dear, inexpreſſibly dear Somerville, is it

poſſible

poſſible you ſhould not? O, you never offended.—I know—I remember nothing of the paſt, let it be buried in eternal oblivion, my future proſpects are all love and joy. Thank heaven, I am now indeed amply rewarded. Nay, I could not——No, my kind generous huſband, I could not merit this bleſſing. —Huſh, my dear Caroline, ſaid he, ſmiling, we will not too nicely weigh the bleſſing, as you are pleaſed to call it, with your deſert, or I fear it would be greatly wanting—All that I can ſay is, that I will from henceforth ſtudy to render you happy, and in your's, I find mine muſt ever be included; what a perverſe obſtinate have I been, ſo long to defer the exquiſite pleaſure I taſte from this reconciliation.—I do not feel the dreaded, yet wiſhed-for ſcene

half ſo humiliating as I apprehended. —Do I, Sir Harry, turning to him, with a ſmile, make a very criminal-like appearance? No, the returning approbation of this dear creature, preſſing her hand, has reſtored me to that dignity I had forfeited by my follies. I am not the leſs ſenſible of them for not making a more penitent confeſſion, and from a relapſe, this my lovely, my guardian angel, will ever ſecure me.—No more my kind, my generous Somerville, ſaid ſhe, I cannot bear this condeſcending goodneſs; O, bleſs me more gradually: I know not what to do with my grateful joy, it quite overpowers me. I want words—You do not need them my love, your looks, your manner, is far more expreſſive.—How, my Lord, reſumed ſhe, looking with

with an air of tenderneſs on Sir Harry, and me, how ſhall I reward theſe incomparable friends, that have with ſuch unwearied zeal, endeavoured and contributed to promote my happineſs.—Why, really my dear, returned he, ſmiling, I believe, we muſt leave them to reward each other.—I bluſhed.—He took my hand.—The agreeable, lively, Sophy, continued he, muſt not be ſurpriſed to find me now become a ſtrenuous advocate for matrimony; but I will leave Sir Harry to plead his own cauſe, ſince nobody can boaſt of more eloquence.—You have given me but little reaſon to boaſt on that head, my Lord, returned he, ſmiling. Mine was a ſingular caſe, Sir.—I fear not ſo very ſingular, interrupted I, archly.—Ah, my ſmart friend, ſaid he, I find, you have

loſt nothing of your uſual vivacity, I muſt be upon my guard; but in revenge for your ſly inſinuation, I here undoubtedly prophecy, that your eloquence, Villiers, will in this ſuit be as ſucceſsful as you could wiſh.—Wretch, who made you a prophet? I am tempted out of mere contradiction to prove you a falſe one.—From mere contradiction—Take courage my friend Harry, there is, you find, but one obſtacle to ſurmount.—Sir Harry gave me a look more eloquent than words.—My Lord propoſed returning to the houſe. My happineſs, ſaid he, great as it is, is not yet compleat, I muſt ſee my girl.—— His Lady with graceful fondneſs took hold of his arm.——Sir Harry would make me follow their example; and thus the two pair of happy lovers—

yes,

yes, lovers,—'tis folly to deny it—Marched on in triumph to the hoſpitable manſion.——How the ſervants ſtared, to ſee their Lady ſo familiarly advancing with, as they imagined, their old friend Sir Harry's man; but when he drew near, when they diſcovered their Lord, never did ſurpriſe and joy equal theirs.—The hall was inſtantly crouded with his domeſticks; who, in their looks, teſtified the moſt reſpectful welcome.—With a graceful condeſcenſion he ſpoke to each, as he paſſed on to the parlour, where ſat the worthy Mrs. Southern, the little Caroline ſtanding at her knee, a book in her hand. ——My Lord ſnatched up the child in his arms, and preſſed her to his breaſt, with all the affection of a delighted father; then turning to the good old

Lady, who ſtood gazing on him, hardly daring to credit her ſenſes.—Can you forgive me, Madam, this is the ſecond time I have been obliged to ſollicit your pardon; but I fear, my laſt offence will not ſo eaſily obtain it as the former.—Good heaven, cried ſhe, falling on her knees, thou haſt then at laſt heard my prayer; to thee firſt my praiſe and thanks are due, and next to you, my Lord, for thus reſtoring my child to happineſs and peace. You have, Sir, not only the pardon you condeſcend to ſolicit, but my bleſſing alſo; may this your ſo ardently wiſhed-for re-union, be the commencement of laſting and uninterrupted felicity to both.—He raiſed and embraced her.—I ſhall add no more on this ſubject, deſcription is faint—Imagine, love, joy, rapture, and delight.

light. Ah, imagine what you will, you can form no adequate idea of the happineſs of this charming pair.—But now I talk of pairs, What ſay you to my conqueſt?—Can you tell what is become of my fixed, my violent averſion to matrimony?—Ah, theſe men—Adieu my dear Mama—I believe you will ſoon have a letter from my ſwain.

Your's, &c.

SOPHY.

## LETTER XXXV.

### To Mrs. WESTBROOK.

THIS day ſe'night is fixed for the recelebration of Lord and Lady Somerville's nuptials.——Lady Brathwait, Miſs, or more properly ſpeaking, Mrs. Anſtruther; in ſhort, all the world have been to congratulate my friend on her Lord's return, all is joy and feſtivity.—I have hardly a moment's leiſure for writing.—My man is very importunate, they teaze me to death amongſt

amongſt them. Would you believe it!—A pretty whim, truly.—Nothing will ſerve them, but I muſt lead up the ſecond couple in this matrimonial dance, and that too, on their day.—So ſoon! —No, 'tis impoſſible.—I am, however, ordered to invite you to be here on the occaſion.——What may be the conſequence of your preſence, and their importunity, Lord knows.—I am half afraid they will peſter me into compliance with their unreaſonable propoſal. —Come, my dear Mama, I had almoſt forgot, my couſin was included in the invitation. I had a good mind to omit this, as Lady Somerville, with a provoking gravity, ſaid, — I eſteem Miſs Allen, but if I did not, her company is neceſſary on this occaſion, as we ſhall be at a loſs for bride-maids for this

double wedding.—Adieu, adieu, my dear Mama: I am hurried to death, but it is a moſt agreeable hurry.—Three carriages—Beau and belles—I am not half dreſſed—What brought them ſo early, I wonder!—No more, I muſt now poſitively lay down my pen.

Your's, ever,

SOPHY.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXVI.

### To Miſs WESTBROOK.

I AM joyfully preparing for my agreeable journey. How do I long to embrace my Sophy; to congratulate her amiable friend, and no leſs herſelf on their happineſs——Sir Harry too—Generous man!——O, my dear girl, be it your ſtudy to deſerve this unexpected——I will not add (for in my partial eyes, at leaſt, you appear worthy of it) unmerited good fortune——'Tis well, you gained this important conqueſt, to talk in your own

own ſtrain, for the poor deſpiſed Audley has found means to conſole himſelf.—I know you will put up your ſcornful lip at this inſinuation.——I will not therefore continue my raillery.—Adieu, my dear girl, preſent all our amiable friends my beſt reſpects.——I ſhall be with you, I hope, on Tueſday.—I am, dear Sophy, your affectionate mother.

C. WESTBROOK.

P. S. Kitty is writing to you, and will give you her reaſon for not being able to accept of Lady Somerville's polite invitation.—Adieu, my love.

LET-

## LETTER XXXVII.

### To Miſs KITTY ALLEN.

SO, you would not come, Kitty? —O, mighty well, child!—But do you know what you have loſt by your obſtinacy?—No leſs than your friend Sophy Weſtbrook.—However, if you are properly penitent for your fault, you may perhaps find her again in Lady Villiers.—Yes, my dear, the important

event

event is over, and I have taken upon me, the once dreaded name of wife.—O, you knew not your own intereſt, when you refuſed to be preſent at the pompous ceremony; how would you have been edified by my exemplary behaviour on the occaſion.—I ſhould have taught you how to acquit yourſelf gracefully, when your man leads you to the altar; without learning your leſſon from me, I fear you will make but an aukward peace of work of it; however, do the beſt you can, and make haſte to countenance my example, you can do no wiſer thing.—When am I to have your congratulations, my dear couſin? I impatiently expect you here, 'tis a delightful place.—Can any ſituation, that is ſo near my Caroline, be otherwiſe to her Sophy?—We appear as

yet

yet to be but one family, nor can our friendly intimacy ever decreaſe.——O, how happy is that amiable woman! how I rejoice in her felicity, and no leſs in my own.——Come, my dear Kitty, and be a witneſs—a ſharer in it; ſpeedily I beſeech you, as you value the friendſhip of your

SOPHY VILLIERS.

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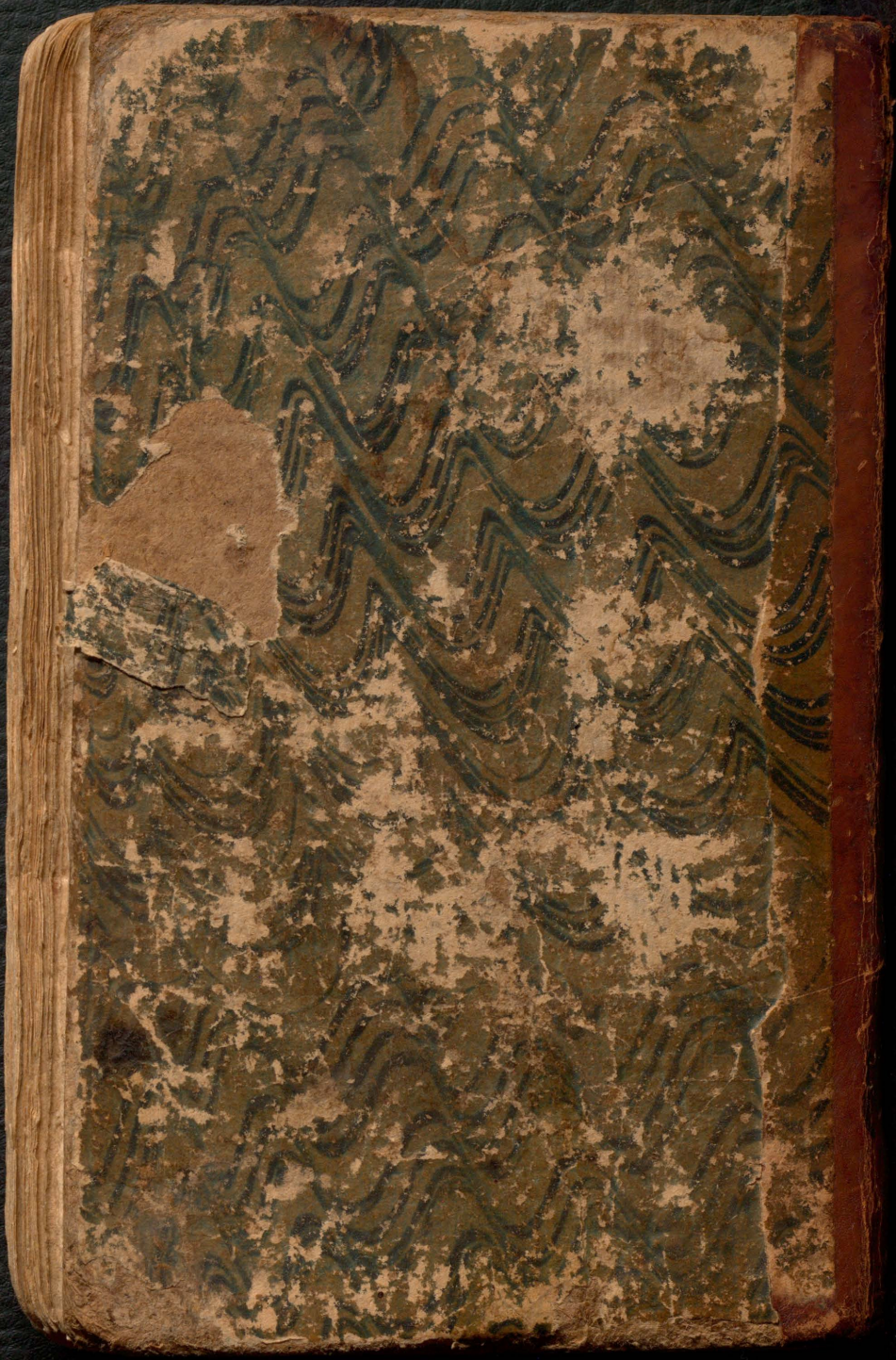
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